GOD AND PROCESS:
A STUDY OF THE SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGICAL ALTERNATIVES IN THE PROCESS PHILOSOPHY OF ALFRED NORTH WHITEHEAD

BY

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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This study assumes that theology inevitably makes use of some philosophical view of reality, and that this usage is better made if it is conscious and deliberate. Among the theologians who accept this contention are those who have begun using the categories of Alfred North Whitehead for a philosophical frame of reference. There seem to be philosophical and theological reasons for this trend. On the philosophical side, Whitehead's system of thought appears to provide a perspective which is modern both in its philosophical relativism and in its adherence to the new cosmology. On the theological side, the philosophy of Whithead seems uniquely capable of bearing certain affirmations essential to religious faith and to the theological enterprize. Of course, one can decide whether Whitehead's position is really coherent and credible as philosophy, and whether it can really give expression to the "right" theological affirmations only after he has examined the Whiteheadian position for himself.

The purpose of this dissertation is (1) to set forth the basic outlines of Whitehead's philosophy, (2) to analyze Whitehead's own doctrine of God and contemporary interpretations of it, and (3) to indicate alternative theological positions which are (a) possible,

given Whitehead's general premises, or (b) possible, given certain alterations in Whitehead's philosophic vision which do not, however, renounce his understanding of the mechanics of process.

If it is successful, this dissertation will show that Whitehead's philosophy can be used to express meaningfully various philosophical judgments and markedly different theologies. From this two things will follow. First, Whitehead's philosophy will be seen to provide a common linguistic context of admirable precision in which men of varying perspectives may more clearly understand each other. In a day when the goal of philosophical thinking is more commonly clarity than certainty this is perhaps enough to offer. Secondly, it will be seen that a number of theological statements once excluded from the realm of intelligibility by the reductionism of philosophical moods now current will again become possible. For by justifying metaphysics as a hypothetical generalization from a finite apprehension of reality for the purpose of expressing one's interpretation of the world, Whitehead will perhaps also succeed in loosing from the bonds of embarrassment the more speculative answers to man's ultimate questions which are of a theological nature.

To my wife

Nancy

for encouragement in countless ways

PREFACE

It is my purpose in this dissertation: (1) to set forth the basic outlines of Whitehead's philosophy, (2) to discuss in detail his doctrine of God, determining which elements of Whitehead's theology are the necessary results of his cosmological assumptions, and (3) to indicate alternative theological positions which are (a) possible, given Whitehead's general premises, or (b) possible, given certain alterations in Whitehead's basic philosophical assumptions.

In chapter one I shall present my own methodological views which, it seems to me, indicate that theology must make use of some philosophical position or positions, and suggest that theology ought to do this consciously and carefully. I will then point to some of the reasons for an interest in Whitehead's philosophy as a vehicle of theological expression.

Chapter two is intended to be a general introduction to Whitehead's view of the world. Though not written in a popular vein, it is hoped that this chapter will, in a nontechnical manner, provide a background for understanding the more technical work to follow.

Chapter three will deal with the basic cosmological assumptions of Whitehead's thought and with the doctrines which are claimed to follow from these premises. Specifically, I will treat Whitehead's theories of actual entities, eternal objects, prehension, concrescence, creativity, the extensive continuum, and societies, because all of these have a direct or indirect bearing on Whitehead's view of God. In this discussion I hope to provide some sense of the progression of Whitehead's thought as well as simply to interpret his meaning.

The fourth chapter is to be an investigation of Whitehead's doctrine of God. It will (1) show how his doctrine of God follows, or is thought to follow, necessarily from Whitehead's general view of process, (2) enter the current debate on the proper interpretation of various aspects of Whitehead's doctrine of God, and (3) attempt to separate that in Whitehead's theology which is essential to his system from that which is systematically possible but not necessary.

Chapter five is to be a discussion of possible implications of Whitehead's doctrine of God--implications which he himself did not elaborate--setting forth alternative ways in which Whitehead's doctrine is developed by others as being most consonant with the philosopher's original assumptions.

Chapter six, seven and eight will be an analysis of some of the alternative doctrines of God which might result from various alterations in Whitehead's system of thought. I hope to show how these semi-Whiteheadian positions might be, or have been used to express different traditional and contemporary doctrines of God.

I want to say here that my original interest in philosophical theology was inspired by Professor Frederick Shoot of Anderson College. Professor Daniel Day Williams first directed my attention toward the theological possibilities inherent in Whitehead's philosophy. Such simple statements as these fail totally to express the enormous influence of these two men upon my thinking, an influence for which I shall continue to be grateful.

Professors John B. Cobb, John Hutchison, Frederick Sontag, James Robinson and Herbert Schneider each influenced this work at some crucial point, and the former three, my graduate committee, were exceptionally helpful and encouraging during the entire undertaking. I want to express my gratitude to them all for their availability and assistance. It must be said, however, that my indebtedness to Professor Cobb, the chairman of my committee, is an unusual on indeed. What I have learned from him so thoroughly infuses this dissertation that complete honesty would require a footnote to that effect on almost every page. And his personal interest, guidance and inspiration increase my debt that much more. I did not always duplicate his views, nor would he care that I do so. It would have been better, though, had his ideas not been so sadly diminished when expressed in my words.

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CHAPTER I

PHILOSOPHY, REVELATION AND THEOLOGICAL THINKING: AN INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

This is a study of theological alternatives which have been or might be developed using the categories of a particular philosophical system. These theologies, however, share more than an indebtedness to the same philosophy. They also have in common the important methodological assumption that Christian theology inevitably makes use of some philosophical view of reality, and that this usage is better made if it is conscious and deliberate. This assumption has a corollary, I believe, which seems to me implicit in the theologies we shall examine, a corollary I should like to make explicit and to defend. It is this: Christian theology is a conceptual response to a specific datum, made in terms of a scheme of ideas which is intended to be a conceptual response to all experiential data taken as a whole. Put in another way, it is my belief that Christian theology has two grounds or givens: one is a specific datum which it takes to be the revelation of God; the other is a general system of ideas or categories, formed in response to all the data of the broadest range of human experience, into which and with which that revelation is received.

In this statement and in the discussion of it to follow, I mean by "theology" any system of ideas grounded in any experiential source, general or specific, which makes interpretive judgments about the meaning or value of the whole of reality, or of any part in terms of the whole. "Philosophy" shall refer to any general system of ideas grounded in any experiential source, general or specific, which makes interpretive judgments about the nature of the whole of reality, or of any part by itself or in terms of the whole. Because the nature of anything would presumably include its value, or its possible values in particular relationships, no theological considerations lie outside of the scope of philosophy, while many philosophical investigations (eg. the nature of language, the character of knowledge, the status of aesthetic objects, etc.) are not necessarily theological, though they may have theological implications. "Christian theology" is a theological system of ideas grounded, on the one hand, in a specific group of experiences, namely, that event which is believed to be the only, or at least the most adequate, manifestation of the nature of God (i.e., "revelation," as we shall use the term) in Jesus of Nazareth, and grounded, on the other hand, in conscious or unconscious, systematic or unsystematic, philosophy.

There are at least two other ways of viewing Christian theology, within the context of this discussion. Both consider theology to have only one necessary and valid ground.

The first alternative interpretation of theology makes the sole given of theology the general system of ideas derived from a universal experience such as thinking, feeling, the sense of moral obligation, etc. From this point of view, the Christian body of beliefs has no necessary source peculiar to itself. The second alternative takes the only valid given of theology to be a single datum which it identifies as the only, or perhaps the highest, revelation of God. This position denies that a system of ideas not derived exclusively from its peculiar datum has any legitimate determinative function in the formation of Christian theological statements. I hope convincingly to argue that Christian theology is not rightly interpreted by either of these positions.

According to the first alternative, that body of beliefs called Christian theology has no unique, particular ground which is historically necessary to itself. On the contrary, these theological conclusions, like the results of all philosophical thought, can be reached equally well by careful reflection upon the general range of human experience. Christian theology, to be sure, is distinguishable from the commonly possible theological statements in the sense that the former refers to a specific cluster of events which illustrates the meaning of its assertions. But these historical illustrations or symbols are not in fact essentially related to the truths which they happen to portray to some people. What alone is necessary to any theology is the broad range of human experiences and ideas.

Immanuel Kant's view of Christian theology is a good example of this position. Kant believed that he could reach precise corollaries of traditional doctrines solely through a consideration of the nature of reason.[1] In Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone, Kant takes the assertions of Christian theology and proceeds to interpret them as offering meanings which correspond to the necessary verities of the timeless religion of reason. One after another, the historically-oriented assertions of Christianity are shown to be mere historical illustrations of truths already residing in our reason. But these symbols are scarcely essential to our knowledge of the truths they embody. For Christian or pagan, according to Kant, ubiquitous reason alone is necessary to the assertions of Christian theology.

In the effort to show Kant's ultimate indebtedness to the specific datum of Christianity, rather than to a consideration of the nature of reason, it is sometimes argued that his doctrine of original sin ("radical evil" Kant calls it) stands in severe contradiction to the basic interpretation of reason upon which his philosophy is constructed. But this contention, though almost certainly true, is beside the point. It still remains logically possible that some philosophical positions, in independence of the Christian datum, might consistently include a counterpart to the Christian view of original sin, or indeed to any and all Christian doctrines. The real point is that we who already stand in the tradition of Christianity can never even test the possibility of constructing a Christian theology apart from the influence of a strand of first-century history.

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[1] For a critique of the Kantian position from an opposing point of view, see Karl Barth, Protestant Thought: from Rousseau to Ritschl (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959), chap. vi, especially pp. 163-74.

In short, one source of our theology is Jesus Christ. We ought, I believe, to confess that fact. Our Christian theology is an interpretation applicable to the total range of reality, but it is an interpretation in fact inspired at least partly by the experiences centering in Jesus of Nazareth.

In the nineteenth century, a rejection of the alternative view of theology we have been discussing would have been hotly contested. Today, the pendulum has swung far to the other side; it has produced what I have suggested as the second alternative interpretation of theology. From this perspective, it is claimed that divine revelation is the manifestation of that which is qualitatively unique. Because revelation is unique, there is no point of contact between it and any human thinking. To be understood, therefore, the divine manifestation must create in the hearer the means of its own reception. Hence, what we have called philosophy, being qualitatively different from divine revelation, is totally unable to bear the meaning of revealed truth.

Some adherents to this position claim that all philosophical categories whatsoever are completely inappropriate for explicating the content of revelation. The verbal expression of divine truth is given in the revelation itself. Others do not hold that propositions are a part of that which is initially given; instead, they claim, revelation compels responsive statements which are human in the sense that they are finite propositions about divine action, yet super-human in the sense that their meaning is entirely determined by the revelational event.

Karl Barth's view of theological method may be taken as one representation of this position. An assumption crucial to Barth's theology is this: "God is in heaven and you upon earth."[2] From this radical separation of God and man it follows that every construction of human reason is even at best only the "groanings of the creature."[3] Hence, "theology begins where the philosophical attempt ends. . . ."[4]

But Barth's analysis is so forceful precisely because it is so sophisticated. Barth is not unaware of the influence of the philosophical perspectives of man upon his theological statements. He, therefore, distinguishes "the Word of God and the word of man";[5] he differentiates Dogma from dogma.[6] The essence of all theological statements, says Barth,

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[2] Karl Barth, The Epistle to the Romans, trans Edwyn C. Hoskyns (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), p. xiii.

[3] *Ibid*., p. 302.

[4] John D. Godsey (recorder and ed.), Karl Barth's Table Talk ("Scottish Journal of Theology Occasional Papers," No. 10; London: Oliver and Boyd, 1963), p. 98.

[5] This is the title of a collection of Barth's addresses translated by Douglas Horton (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957).

> that which all dogmas aiming at revealed truth wish to say, is dogma itself; and that is the subject of dogmatic enquiry. In describing it as the essence of all such formulations we imply that it is not itself a formulation, and was never proclaimed by any Church. It is what is intended by all such formulae--the dogma for the sake of which the Church proclaims its dogmas. Dogma means the reality whose appearances must take the form of dogmas, and conclusions of dogmatic thought, and by whose authority real dogmas and dogmatic convictions can come to be, when they are moulded by it.[7]

The effort of the theologian should be towards the elimination of all philosophy and philosophical presuppositions from dogma in order that, by God's grace and power, Dogma might be all the more manifest. Barth, dedicated to this very conviction, revised his own Prolegomena to Christian Dogmatics in an attempt to disavow any dependence upon existential philosophy,[8] for whether the philosophy utilized is that of a Christian or not is immaterial; philosophy is always only philosophy.[9]

Barth's claim is that, because Dogma is the norm and subject of dogmas, every attempt should be made to eliminate all that is not determined by Dogma from dogma. But this, I should argue, is not to rule out every philosophical system. It may be that what Barth sees as "intended by" all dogmas cannot also be "intended by" any prevalent philosophical system. But philosophy, defined as a general system of ideas about the nature of reality, is not simply on that account ruled out as a possible medium through which a particular revelation may be borne. The task of philosophical reflection is to make clear what theological possibilities lie within its vision. Judgments as to its adequacy to bear the essence of a particular revelatory event must then be made. If all existing philosophical systems are deemed inadequate, the theologian will then himself, overtly or covertly, devise a general system of ideas which interpret the nature of reality (i.e., his philosophy) into which he will set his judgments about the meaning and value of reality (i.e., his theology).

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[6] Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, ed. and trans. G. T. Thompson *et al*. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1936), I, 1, p. 306.

[7] *Ibid*., p. 283. [8] *Ibid*., p. ix. [9] *Ibid*., p. 143.

The foregoing has been less a conclusive argument against alternative views of the relation of revelation and philosophy in theology than it has a confession of a point of view. It has been successful enough, however, if it has made plain reasons for the central assumption underlying this endeavor--that both revelation and philosophy are inevitable factors in the form of Christian theological statements. If this assumption bears a hint of validity, it should spur us to search for an adequate philosophical vehicle in theology.

But I should like to acknowledge a further assumption of mine which makes an analysis of a philosophy's adequacy to the total range of one's experience even more important. It is my view that philosophy is more than a factor present in the form of theological statements; it, like the revelation to which one stands in debt, is inevitably a determinant of the content of theological vision.

A clue to why one's philosophical position influences his ideas of revelation may be found when we discover the factors which determine our ideas of any object of experience, religious or otherwise. First in the experiencing relationship we recognize the contribution of the object experienced. But at the same time, we cannot ignore the contribution of our own perspective--a vast, intricate and not always conscious systematization of past experiences which reflects the way we have tentatively regarded the nature of our known world. This is what I have called philosophy. Philosophy, as here understood, is not a static scheme of ideas. It is always influenced, however minimally, by each object-as-experienced. And to some small degree at least, philosophy influences one's experience of each object. The two, the object of an experience and the implicit perspective of the experiencer, are always present and intermingled so ambiguously that their isolation in thought is finally quite impossible.

The implication of this analysis for the relationship between revelation and philosophy in theology are important. When we ask whether revelation or our subjective philosophical stance is finally determinative of our theology, we cannot answer with certainty, for we are really asking about revelation-received-in-terms-of-our-philosophy and philosophy-influenced-by-revelation. Moreover, when we ask for the absolute, timeless essence of the Christian revelation, we can only answer from our relative position, embedded in a time-and-culture-conditioned philosophical perspective. We are just never able to deal with the question of authority in theology or of the essence of revelation in terms of "pure" revelation or "pure" philosophy.

From this point of view, we can understand why theological systems which look to the same specific experience as being divine revelation, vary from each other, and themselves undergo internal change. We can also understand the influence of philosophy upon the history of Christian theological thinking, accepting that influence as a natural element of theological construction. Most important, we are able to recognize fully the relevance of either philosophy or revelation in Christ without neglecting the other.

Let us, in conclusion, be more precise about the relation of revelation to philosophy in Christian theology. In the first place, each plays a positive and a negative role. Positively, each contributes to the form and content of theological statements; and, negatively, each tends tentatively to circumscribe the sphere of what the other may contribute to those statements. That is, if our philosophy eliminates the possibility of, say, walking on water or a single cosmic order, then we shall be inclined to question seriously any such implications on the part of revelation. But, if some such claim from revelation persists with a compelling degree of authenticity so that we come to be, psychologically speaking, fairly certain of its claims, it is likely that we shall alter our philosophical position to account for such phenomena.[10] This facet of the relation between philosophy and our conceptual response to revelation is, in principle, no different from the relation between philosophy and our conceptual response to any other particular experience. Consider, for example, the alleged reality of extrasensory perception. Today, most philosophers probably doubt that such occurs, though not all of their philosophies logically exclude the possibility. If, however, the claim of extrasensory perception were to persist so that we should become quite certain of its reality, those who philosophically rule out that possibility are likely to make radical philosophical changes very quickly.

A second aspect of the relation of revelation and philosophy in theology is the giveness of each. Neither is alone the primordial factor in our theological knowledge. Neither can finally be abstracted from the other in theological thought. Revelation and philosophy exist in a continuous dialogue. For example, it is a fact that we who are born into the Western intellectual heritage are reared amid a philosophical vision that has already in some manner or other, taken account of Christian revelation. Hence, when we first think reflectively upon those first-century events we do so in terms of a philosophical outlook already influenced by those events. There is no hearing of the gospel without the presuppositions of some philosophy, and in our case, there are no philosophical presuppositions not partly influenced in some way by the gospel.

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[10] See John Hick, Faith and Knowledge (Ithaca: Cornell University press, 1957), chap. one, for an excellent discussion of knowledge as psychological certainty.

For the Christian--that is, for him for whom the events centering in Jesus Christ are the central determinant of the judgments he makes about the meaning and value of the whole of reality, or of any part in light of the whole--for the Christian, there is no possibility of constructing a philosophical scheme of ideas in isolation from his positive response to what he believes to be the revelation of God to him. His philosophy must at least include the possibility of such an occurrence as he believes the Christ-event to be (though his philosophy by no means need legislate that such an event must have occurred). But also for the Christian, as for everyone, the validity of a philosophical viewpoint depends upon its ability to account for the total range of his (direct and mediated) experiences both coherently and adequately. Hence, the question of the acceptability of a philosophical system must be dealt with in terms of that system's internal logical coherence, and of its ability to illumine all of the facts of human experience, one of which the Christian believes to be God's revelation of himself. It would therefore seem incumbent upon the Christian theologian to consider carefully the coherence and adequacy of his philosophical scheme of ideas in terms of the total range of his experiences, as well as in terms of an event especially important for him.

I have argued that both philosophy and revelation are essential to Christian theological thinking. Among the theologians who accept this contention are those who have begun using the categories of Alfred North Whitehead for a philosophical frame of reference. There seem to be philosophical and theological reasons for this modest trend. On the philosophical side, Whitehead's system of thought appears to provide a perspective which is modern both in its philosophical relativism and in its adherence to the new cosmology. These process theologians judge the adoption of such a perspective to be the only responsible option open to them in view of certain modern and contemporary realizations. They also believe that Whitehead's philosophy is the best philosophical statement from this perspective. On the theological side, the philosophy of Whitehead seems capable of bearing certain religious affirmations essential to faith and to the theological enterprize. Of course, whether Whitehead's position is really coherent and credible as philosophy, and whether it can really give expression to the "right" theological doctrines--these decisions must be made by each person for himself.

In succeeding chapters I shall only attempt to indicate (a) the vision of reality involved in Whitehead's philosophy, and (b) the various positions regarding the nature of God which are possible within Whitehead's basic framework. I will try to show what changes in Whitehead's own philosophical assumptions are required in order to produce each of these doctrines of God.

Obviously, I believe Whitehead's philosophy can be used to express various philosophical judgments and markedly different theologies. If I am correct, two things follow, First, we will find that a number of theological statements once excluded from the realm of intelligibility by the reductionism of philosophical moods now current will again become possible. They may not be widely acceptable, but at least they now may be meaningfully asserted. Secondly, because men who disagree philosophically and theologically may share the use of Whiteheadian terminology for the purpose of discussion, a clearer understanding of their essential points of difference can be reached than is often possible. The number of philosophical disputants who "talk past each other" is notorious. Using the same terminology unequivocally in such discussions may be of some value in distinguishing real from merely apparent disagreements.

The following chapters will convince no one that Whitehead's philosophy should be adopted to the exclusion of all others--for the expression of theological convictions or for any other reason. At most, this system of thought is but the best set of philosophical tools now available to us in dealing with most conceptual problems. Furthermore, I should be the last to argue that Whitehead's philosophy can be used to express every theological and philosophical doctrine. Some statements are clearly excluded by Whitehead's philosophy from the outset. As I have said, whether the "right" statements are possible must be the decision of each person for himself. Such a decision is sensible only after we have explored Whitehead's view of reality, his philosophical categories, and the theological alternatives this system presents to us.

CHAPTER II

WHITEHEAD'S VIEW OF REALITY

In order to understand Whitehead's concept of God we need to examine the fundamental themes of his total cosmology. That is the task of this chapter and the next. In the first section of this chapter, we will deal with Whitehead's understanding of the philosophical endeavor itself. Then, we shall consider certain aspects of experience which lead us, Whitehead believes, to the fundamental categories of his philosophical system. Chapter three will be an exposition of those basic ideas.

The Nature of Philosophical Thinking

Philosophy, Whitehead tells us, is the attempt to understand the things we observe.[1] Specifically, it is "the endeavor to frame a coherent, logical, necessary system of general ideas in terms of which every element of our experience can be interpreted."[2] Such an endeavor has two sides--one is rational, the other empirical.[3] On its rational side, philosophy is a "system of general ideas" governed by the requirement that it be coherent and logical. By "coherent" Whitehead means that any idea of the speculative scheme must be incapable of full comprehension apart from the other terms. The ideas must presuppose each other; in isolation they are meaningless. Hence, as one comes to understand any one idea in the system, inevitably he is led to another. Whitehead uses "logical" in its ordinary sense; it includes "lack of contradiction . . . , the principle of inference," etc. Now admittedly, this view of the rational side of philosophy is determined by the assumption that the scheme of ideas ought to reflect the experienced world, and by the presupposition that the entities of this world are themselves related logically and coherently.

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[1] A. N. Whitehead, Modes of Thought (New York: Macmillan, 1938), p. 208. (Cited hereafter as MT.)

[2] A. N. Whitehead, Process and Reality (New York: Macmillan, 1929), p. 41. (Cited hereafter as PR.) Cf. A. N. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas (New York: Macmillan, 1933), pp. 285ff. (pp. 223ff.). (The latter is cited hereafter as AI. Pagination in parentheses refers to the Mentor paperback edition.)

The empirical side of philosophy is the fact that it is an "applicable" and "adequate" interpretation of "every element of our experience."[4] "Applicable" means, of course, that at least some experiential data are capable of being interpreted as the system attempts to interpret them. "Adequate" means not only that no present data are incapable of such interpretation, but also that this scheme of ideas is applicable to every possible experience.

Whitehead compares the process of speculation to the flight of an airplane.[5] Its take off or starting point is "the analytic observation of components of . . . experience."[6] In flight it is an imaginative generalization of ideas drawn from experience into coherent and logical principles.[7] Whitehead clarifies this view of generalization as follows: "philosophic generalization . . . [means] the 'utilization of specific notions, applying to a restricted group of facts, for the divination of the generic notions which apply to all facts.'"[8] The end of the speculative flight comes when the scheme settles upon some range of experience beyond that from which it originated. If the flight is successful we shall find that the scheme of ideas provides an applicable and adequate interpretation of that range of experience.

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[3] PR 5. [4] PR 4, 5. [5] PR 7.

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[6] PR 6; cf. also PR 7, 172, 266-68; AI 290f. (227).

[7] Cf. PR 310-11; AI 283f. (221f.).

[8] PR 8. W. Mays, in The Philosophy of Whitehead (New York: Collier Books, 1962), pp. 33-39 and 40f., argues that there is a strong similarity between Whitehead's view of the method of mathematics and his idea of philosophical generalization. Mathematics, Mays says, investigates the relation of abstract patterns derived from empirically connected events. The general categories of the philosophical scheme are obtained by abstraction or generalization from specific experiences.

It is true that Whitehead protests philosophy's preoccupation with the model of mathematical method (PR 11f.), a protest which seems to go against May's view. But Mays is correct in pointing out that Whitehead, in this passage, is rejecting the idea of giving to philosophical premises the same status given to mathematical premises (Mays, p. 40f.). In mathematical generalization, the premises are often axiomatic, self-evident (PR 12); in philosophical generalization they are always postulative, hypothetical.

Generally May's entire discussion of Whitehead's philosophical method (in chapter one of his book) is very good. Also quite good is the discussion in Part One of Ivor Leclerc's Whitehead's Metaphysics: An Introductory Exposition (New York: Macmillan, 1958), especially chapter three.

We need not be told that both the possibility and profit of such speculation is often denied. Whitehead insists, however, that we can and we must reject those denials.[9] It is true, he says in answer to one objection, that discarded philosophical systems lie in heaps about us, but the same is true of any theoretical undertaking, including scientific theory. In any system of thought, "the proper test [of its usefulness] is not that of finality, but of progress."[10] And Whitehead believes we have made philosophical progress. But objectors also note the seeming uselessness of speculation. What we really need, men from Francis Bacon on have claimed, is not speculative interpretations, but simple descriptions of matters of fact. Whitehead in answer, shows both the error of the objection and the necessity of speculation.

> Unfortunately for this objection, there are no brute, self-contained matters of fact, capable of being understood apart from interpretation as an element in a system. Whenever we attempt to express the matter of immediate experience, we find that its understanding leads us beyond itself, to its contemporaries, to its past, to its future, and to the universals in terms of which its definiteness is exhibited. But such universals, by their very character of universality, embody the potentiality of other facts with variant types of definiteness. Thus the understanding of the immediate brute fact requires its metaphysical interpretation as an item in a world with some systematic relation to it.[11]

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[9] PR 20ff.

[10] PR 21. Cf. also AI 164 (132): "Our metaphysical knowledge is slight, superficial, incomplete. Thus errors creep in. But, such as it is, metaphysical understanding guides imagination and justifies purpose. Apart from metaphysical presupposition there can be no civilization."

[11] PR 21-22. Cf. also Modes of Thought, chapter one, where Whitehead characterizes the idea of "mere facts" as a myth which, however useful, omits something vitally important.

In sum, Whitehead argues that interpretation is ground into what seems to be the most objective observation of matters of fact. Therefore, we have to choose not between interpretation and description, but between critical interpretive description (or speculative philosophy) and illusion.

That very character of experience which makes speculation inevitable, i.e., the unavailability of brute fact, also makes speculation tentative, incapable of being finalized. "In particular, there are no precisely stated axiomatic certainties from which to start";[12] no "clear-cut complete analysis of immediate experience."[13] Then, as if we were not already convinced of the frailty of philosophy, Whitehead calls our attention to the ambiguity of language[14] and to the inadequate imaginative powers of the human intellect.[15]

We ought to pay particular attention here, I believe, in order to understand what Whitehead believes himself to be doing. Often Whitehead is classed with the bold metaphysicians of the past. In terms of the scope of his philosophy, this is a correct understanding. But it can also be misleading if we do not recognize his far less bold view of philosophizing itself. In clear distinction from those ambitious thinkers of yesteryear, Whitehead insists that a speculative interpretation of experience, however vast it must be in scope, is but a "working hypothesis",[16] a tentative generalization likely to be discarded and replaced in the next generation.[17]

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[12] PR 19. [13] PR 6. [14] PR 6, 18ff.; MT 67ff.

[15] PR 6. [16] AI 286 (223) [17] MT 174.

This sounds more like a modern scientist than a rationalist philosopher claiming to think God's thoughts after him. If Whitehead's philosophical ideas are coherent and logical, and if they are applicable and adequate to our experience, then we shall profit from leaning heavily upon them. But the framer of the system himself has warned us against illusions of finality in speculation,[18] even as earlier he warned us against the illusion of attempting to avoid speculation.

Much has been said about the need for a philosophical interpretation to be applicable and adequate to any experience. The question then arises concerning the test of a system's adequacy. Whitehead answers that the only possible test, finally, is self-evidence.

> The whole /philosophical/ effort should be to display the self-evidence of basic truths, concerning the nature of things and their connection.[19]
>
> As an example of this doctrine, in philosophical writings proof should be at a minimum.[20]
>
> Unless proof has produced self-evidence and thereby rendered itself unnecessary, it has issued in a second-rate state of mind, producing action devoid of understanding. Self-evidence is the basic fact on which all greatness supports itself. But 'proof' is one of the routes by which self-evidence is often obtained.[21]
>
> Philosophy is the attempt to make manifest the fundamental evidence as to the nature of things. . . . Philosophy is either self-evident, or it is not philosophy.

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[18] Philosophers, writes Whitehead, "can never hope finally to formulate these metaphysical first principles" (PR 6); and early in Process and Reality Whitehead admits the unsatisfactory nature of his own formulation (PR 30). Cf. also PRx, 11-14, 19 and MT 67.

[19] MT 66f. [20] MT 66. [21] MT 66.

> The attempt of any philosophic discourse should be to produce self-evidence. Of course it is impossible to achieve any such aim. But none the less, all inference in philosophy is a sign of that imperfection which clings to all human endeavor. The aim of philosophy is sheer disclosure.[22]

The adequacy and applicability of philosophical principles to experience must be self-evident. If they are not, that philosophy somewhere has failed

Summing up this section, we recall that Whitehead intends to frame a coherent and logical system of general ideas in terms of which we may interpret every element of our experience. This scheme, applicable to any and every facet of experience, is initially reached by generalizing some specific, immediate datum. Some degree of interpretation is involved in every act of awareness, for blunt matters of fact are simply unavailable to us. Speculative philosophy, therefore, is merely the critical consideration and generalization of these more primitive acts of interpretation. But precisely because we never have universally apparent factuality with which to begin, we are advised to view our speculation as perspectival, relative, and hence tentative. Having discarded any attempt to reach logically coercive conclusions deduced from axiomatic certainties, the only possible test of philosophical adequacy that remains is self-evidence.

This is Whitehead's view of what he calls the speculative flight. If we wish to understand the general ideas of Whitehead's system, we ought, I believe, to begin at the start of his endeavor, at experience as Whitehead believes we intuit it to be.

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[22] MT 67.

Experience and The Nature of Reality

In 1934, Whitehead delivered two lectures at Chicago which were first published as Nature and Life, but later incorporated into Modes of Thought as chapters seven and eight. These lectures offer a superb example of the way Whitehead moves from immediate experience toward the systematic postulates or principles of his philosophy.

What, Whitehead asks, are the most prominent contributors to our immediate conscious experience? One of the obvious answers is our experience in the past moment, "our own state of mind directly preceeding the immediate present of our conscious experience."

> A quarter of a second ago, we were entertaining such and such ideas, we were enjoying such and such emotions, and we were making such and such observations of external fact. In our present state of mind, we are continuing that previous state. The word 'continuing' states only half the truth. In one sense it is too weak, and in another sense it overstates. It is too weak, because we not only continue, but we claim absolute identity with our previous state. It was our very identical self in that state of mind, which is of course the basis of our present experience a quarter of a second later. In another sense the word 'continuing' overstates. For we do not quite continue in our preceding state of experience. New elements have intervened. . . . We fuse these new elements with the basic stuff of experience provided by our state of mind a quarter of a second ago.[23]

But there is not only a continuity of successive moments of experience, and a discontinuity of this succession resulting from the intervention of new elements; there is also the peculiar fact of sheer gaps in consciousness. "We sleep or we are stunned. And yet it is the same person who recovers consciousness."[24]

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[23] MT 219-20.

Whitehead is saying that there is at least one aspect of reality, i.e., conscious experience, which seems a kind of unity of successive experiences[25]--moments of experience, discrete and yet continous in some clear manner.[26] Therefore, when we begin constructing principles applicable to reality in general, among other things we must take into account this characteristic of our mental life.

What also contributes to our present conscious experience besides the past occasions of our mental life? There is sense perception: sight, smell, taste, touch, and hearing. But what is involved in sense-perception? Just external objects or qualities? Not according to Whitehead. "Occasionally flashing into prominence," he writes, "are an indefinite set of obscure bodily feelings which form a background" for the perception of external objects.[27] Even, for example, in the case of sight, where the role of the body is most slight, there is the vague awareness that we are seeing some particular scene with our eyes. Indeed, "all sense perception is merely one outcome of the dependence of our experience upon bodily functions."[28] But the body is more than a medium enabling perceptual experience. Sometimes we have mental states or emotions "only casually associated with particular sensa."[29] These emotions are more directly dependent upon the body, upon the proper or improper functioning of certain bodily organs.[30] Judging from this, it would seem that there is a significant connection between mind and body; in fact Whitehead believes our basic feelings force us to insist upon some type of real unity of body and mind.[31] Underscoring this unity, Whitehead writes:

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[24] MT 222.

[25] This is the "soul" in Whitehead's terminology. See MT 224.

[26] Cf. AI 239f. (188). [27] MT 209. [28] MT 218.

> The body is mine, and the antecedent experience is mine. Still more, there is only one ego, to claim the body and to claim the stream of experience. I submit that we have here the fundamental basic persuasion on which we found the whole practice of our existence. While we exist, body and soul are inescapable elements in our being, each with the full reality of our own immediate self. But neither body nor soul possesses the sharp observational definition which at first sight we attribute to them.[32]

Previously we noted that in constructing philosophical principles we would need to take into account the unity of discrete particles of successive moments of mental experience. Now we should add that there is a unity between mental activity and bodily activity which cannot be ignored by philosophy.

Returning to our consideration of the components of our most immediate experience, we realize that conscious life involves more than mind and body; it includes the experience of external nature. What, then, is the relation of the sharply defined body to the rest of nature? Whitehead's answer is that such a sharp division does not exist.

The body consists of the coordinated functionings of bil-

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[29] MT 219. [30] MT 218. [31] MT 219. [32] MT 220-21.

> lions of molecules. It belongs to the structural essence of the body that, in an indefinite number of ways, it is always losing molecules and gaining molecules. When we consider the question of microscopic accuracy, there is no definite boundary to determine where the body begins and external nature begins. . . . Thus there is a unity of the body with the environment, as well as a unity of body and soul into one person.[33]

If there is a unity of mind and body, and of body and nature, we might expect some kind of unity of mind (or soul) and nature. But Whitehead claims this continuity is no mere inference; we are directly aware of it.

> Let us ask what is the function of the external world for the stream of experience which constitutes the soul. This world, thus experienced, is the basic fact within those experiences. All the emotions, and purposes, and enjoyments, proper to the individual existence of the soul are nothing other than the soul's reaction to this experienced world which lies at the base of the soul's existence.[34]

Whitehead continues by pointing out the peculiar character of the relationship of the soul and nature.

> Thus in a sense, the experienced world is one complex factor in the composition of many factors constituting the essence of the soul. . . . In one sense the world is in the soul.
>
> But there is an antithetical doctrine balancing this primary truth. Namely, our experience of the world involves the exhibition of the soul itself as one of the components within the world. . . . The world is included within the occasion in one sense, and the occasion is included in the world in another sense.[35]
>
> The antithetical character of the soul-nature continuity extends to all the connections which we have been discussing. For example, consider the enduring self-identity of the soul. The soul is nothing else than the succession of my occasions of experience, extending from birth to the present moment. Now, at this instant, I am the complete person embodying all these occasions. They are mine. On the other hand it is equally true that my immediate occasion of experience, at the present moment, is only one among

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[33] MT 221; cf. also MT 29-30. [34] MT 223-24. [35] MT 224.

> the stream of occasions which constitutes my soul. Again. the world for me is nothing else than how the functionings of my body present it for my experience. . . . And yet, on the other hand, the body is merely one society of functionings within the universal society of the world.[36]

Now why has Whitehead led us into this long, reflective investigation? The answer is that Whitehead believes the unity we have observed among what we usually think of as totally disparate elements of reality leads us directly to a philosophical principle which takes this unity seriously. In his words:

> Thus, as disclosed in the fundamental essence of our experience, the togetherness of things involves some doctrine of mutual immanence. In some sense or other, this community of the actualities of the world means that each happening is a factor in the nature of every other happening.[37]

To omit this doctrine, Whitehead maintains, makes it quite impossible to make sense of some very ordinary experiences.

> Consider our notion of 'causation'. How can one event be the cause of another [i.e., be the partial conditioner of the formation of a successor]? . . .
>
> The mere notion of transferring a quality is entirely unintelligible. Suppose that two occurrences may be in fact detached so that one of them is comprehensible without reference to the other. Then all notion of causation between them, or of conditioning, becomes unintelligible. There is--with this supposition--no reason why the possession of any quality by one of them should in any way influence the possession of that quality, or of any other quality, by the other. . . . The only intelligible doctrine of causation is founded on the doctrine of immanence. Each occasion presupposes the antecedent world as active in its own nature. This is the reason why events have a determinate status relatively to each other. Also this is the reason why the qualitative energies of the past are combined into a pattern of qualitative energies in each present occasion. This is the doctrine of causation. It is the reason why it belongs to the essence of each occasion that it is where it is. It is the reason

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[36] MT 224-25. [37] MT 225.

> for the transference of character from occasion to occasion. It is the reason for the relative stability of laws of nature. . . . It is the reason why . . . we find . . . a two fold unity with observed data. . . . This fact of observation, vague but imperative, is the foundation of the connexity of the world, and of the transmission of its types of order.[38]

Whitehead began by clarifying our immediate awareness of the unity of successive moments of mental activity. Then he led us to recognize a continuity between this mental experience and the body, on the one hand, and nature on the other. But precisely how strongly the word "unity" applies to these relationships depends upon the nature of mind, body and the remainder of the natural world. That is, if all natural activities (including those of the body) are mental in the same sense that conscious experience is mental, as Idealism has claimed, then a very strong unity would be easy to postulate and to accept. But in fact we do not experience, say, a tree as being very similar to the act of contemplating the idea of justice. Neither does Whitehead. Most of us simply refuse to believe that trees are only growths in the mind of God, however fertile the divine soil! On the other hand, if mental and physical occurrences are entirely different in kind, as most non-Idealist philosophy has assumed, the interaction we seem to observe is completely unintelligible--unintelligible, that is, unless we arbitrarily invoke a _deus ex machina_, a God who obligingly arranges the conjunction of mental and physical events so that they appear genuinely to interact.

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[38] MT 225-27.

But most of us find this alternative rather uninviting; we wish to avoid ascribing this unduly time-consuming task to God. So does Whitehead. How then do we escape this ancient impasse?

Whitehead suggests that we consider carefully what modern science has to say about trees and bricks and colors, bearing in mind our discussion of the nature of mental activity. He writes:

> The modern point of view is expressed in terms of energy, activity, and the vibratory differentiations of space-time. Any local agitation shakes the whole universe. The distant effects are minute, but they are there. The concept of matter presupposed simple location. Each bit of matter was self-contained, localized in a region with a passive, static network of spatial relations, entwined in a uniform relational system from infinity to infinity and from eternity to eternity. But in the modern concept the group of agitations which we term matter is fused into its environment. There is no possibility of a detached, self-contained local existence. The environment enters into the nature of each thing. Some elements in the nature of a complete set of agitations may remain stable as those agitations are propelled through a changing environment. But such a stability is only the case in a general, average way. This average fact is the reason why we find the same chair, the same rock and the same planets enduring for days, or for centuries or for millions of years. In this average fact the time-factor takes the aspect of endurance, and change is a detail. The fundamental fact, according to the physics of the present day, is that the environment with its peculiarities seeps into the group-agitation which we term matter, and the group-agitations extend their character to the environment.[39]

Now what is the point of bringing notions of modern physics into a discussion heretofore leaning so heavily upon ordinary human experience? One point is this: Ordinary experience first produces the feeling of the unity of nature, body and mind, yet turns about to deny the possibility of this unity on the basis of the fact that solid, enduring rocks and trees are so very different from mentality. But Whitehead is saying that modern physics throws the latter assumption of common sense sharply into question. In fact, rocks and trees are societies of centers of vibrant activity. At the very least we must admit that there is a striking similarity (on the surface, at any rate) between the quanta of physical activity or energy extending their character beyond themselves, and the moments of mental activity also contributing their character to succeeding moments. Seemingly, both are discrete atoms, and both are internally related to other entities. Both are formed by the influence of other occasions of energy or experience, and both impress their character upon other particles.

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[39] MT 188-89.

Indeed we might even ask whether ordinary experience really reveals the sharp physical-mental division we had thought. Where, for example, do we determine a distinct line dividing physical and mental activity. Consider our perception of a hard surface. The initial phase of that perception, I suppose, is the sensation registered by the nerve endings in our finger tips. The final phase might be the registering of the idea of hardness in what we call mental reflection. But at what point does physical sensation become mental apprehension?

In view of the vague but persistent observation of some kind of unity of mind and nature (including body), the greater similarity of physical events and mental experiences than we generally realize, and the fact that interacting mind and matter seem more like opposing ends of a continuum than distinctively divided realms--in view of these considerations we may understand why Whitehead takes the idea of mutual immanence as seriously as he does, and without apology.

In sum, recognition of the basic unity of all entities, mental, physical, or otherwise--a recognition which intends not to gloss over vast degrees of difference among them--is the first principle of Whitehead's philosophy. He writes: "The doctrine that I am maintaining is that neither physical nature nor life can be understood unless we fuse them together as essential factors in the composition of 'really real' things whose interconnections and individual characters constitute the universe."[40] This unity, he holds, is by virtue of the pervasive character of an appreciative capacity, present in mental activity as the ability to apprehend or to feel. "The key notion from which . . . [philosophical] construction should start is that energetic activity considered in physics is the emotional intensity entertained in life."[41]

Now let us review what Whitehead has done. He has taken a specific aspect of conscious experience and generalized it, applying it to all of reality. That element is the "unity through feeling" in mental activity, i.e., the continuity of discrete moments of mentality by virtue of their ability to take account of the character of each other. Whitehead leads us to see that this notion is applicable to othersituations, eg., mental awareness of bodily activity. Then he points out the fact that even as a unity pervades mental-mental and mental-bodily relations, so some kind of unity is present in the strictly non-mental relations that physics studies. Is it possible that the unity between bodily events and other aspects of nature, and between external natural events, is also characterized by a form of "feeling," however faint in degree? Whitehead believes it is.[42]

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[40] MT 205. Cf. also MT 210, 213f.; PR 164, 268; AI 237f. (186f.), 241 (190).

[41] MT 231-32; cf. also PR 177-79.

Perhaps Whitehead's major defense for his psychophysical monism,[43] as some call his view, aside from what he insists is some slight experiential evidence,[44] is the difficulty of reverting to the older dualism. First, as I have mentioned, the idea of interrelatedness among two realms different in kind seems incomprehensible.[45] But without some kind of interrelation our experience is unintelligible.[46] Secondly, under a mental-physical dualism, the generally accepted idea of most "hard-headed" philosophers and scientists that human experience is a part of nature becomes a "mere bluff."[47]

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[42] Because it is somewhat obscured by the unsystematic nature of the present discussion, I should point out now what will become more clear later, namely that Whitehead is not confusing ontological unity (by which I mean some kind of essential unity which endures apart from unity in perception) with epistemological unity; he is not establishing the latter, thinking thereby to have verified the former. Whitehead has claimed that we can observe both types of relatedness down to a certain level. For example, the moment of my beginning this sentence cannot only be held together with the present moment conceptually; it also can be observed to be causally related to the moment of my finishing this sentence (PR 197)--a relation which obtains with or without my observation of it (MT 21-20; see ~~p.~~ 23 above). It is even possible, Whitehead has argued, vaguely to observe the ontological relation of mental states to parts of the body (MT 209, 218, 219; see p. 24f. above). Below the level of verifiable ontological unity, where perceptual unity may still exist clearly, Whitehead simply postulates ontological relatedness. Without this postulate, he believes, our common-sense assumption of the causal connection of external events in nature and ideas in the mind becomes absurd, as Hume showed, as do a number of other ordinary experiences (MT 225-27; see p. 27f. above).

[43] The term "monism" is misleading; Whitehead is not a monist in the sense of holding that there is only one entity which is fully real.

[44] PR 164.

Notwithstanding these points in defense of his approach, in order to merit our consideration Whitehead must actually produce a system which recognizes a real unity of mind and nature without resorting to a reductionism, physical or mental; and one which does justice to the other facets of our experience as well. That is a judgment we can make only after we have considered Whitehead's systematic cosmology.

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[45] AI 169f. (137). [46] MT 227.

[47] AI 237ff. (186ff.). Among the interpreters of Whitehead, W. Mays is the most vociferous in his attack upon Whitehead's psycho-physical monism. In his book, cited above, Mays criticizes, first, the basic doctrine itself (224-29 and 251-60), secondly, derivative doctrines (eg., the order of nature, 69-70; transmutation, 180-83; symbolic reference, 185-87; presented locus, 195-99; causal efficacy, 200-202; non-mental societies, 221-22; the uniformity of space-time, 244; self-determination of actual entities, 246-51), and, finally, Whitehead's speculative method (35)--all on the basis of his own rejection of Whitehead's particular kind of monism.

In the main, I believe, Mays' critical points are (a) that the energy studied in physics probably has no physical reality (237-38), and (b) that even if physically real, physical energy is so different from emotional activity that similar descriptive language is inadmissable (232-34) unless, with Whitehead, one confuses the sensory, physiological and physical aspects of the human organism (251ff.). Mays, of course, does not claim to have disproved Whitehead's thesis (as Whitehead does not claim to have proved it), but he does think it totally without experiential evidence and, presumably, without superior explanatory value.

CHAPTER III

ELEMENTS OF WHITEHEAD'S PHILOSOPHY

Actual Entities

The foundation of Whitehead's view of the world is the postulate that reality is a diversity within a genuine unity. In the last chapter we called this unity a "unity through feeling." Whitehead himself uses many terms to designate the generic character of reality, but most common, I believe, is the term "experience."[1] "The final facts," Whitehead insists, "are, all alike, . . . drops of experience, complex and interdependent."[2] And again: "The actualities of the Universe are processes of experience . . . ."[3]

Whitehead does not mean simply that some aspect of every entity is experiential. If this were all he intended to say, he would be espousing a position in which the nonexperiential portion of an entity would be generically different from the experiential part. In such a view generic unity would be lacking and incoherence would result. To the contrary, Whitehead clearly asserts that any concrete reality, whole and part, is experiential. Experience is the generic character of reality.

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[1] When Whitehead used "experience" in the previous chapter, he meant human, conscious experience--a particular kind of generic experience. To avoid confusion in chapter two, I did not introduce Whitehead's broader usage of the term.

[2] PR 28.

[3] AI 253 (199). Cf. also PR 65, 81, 105, 207, 220, 230f., 246f., 320f., 408; AI 225-30 (177-81), and A. N. Whitehead, _The_ _Function_ _of_ _Reason_ (Boston: Beacon Press, 1929), p. 31. (The latter is cited hereafter as FR.)

A. The Plurality of Actual Entities

To argue that reality is a unity because it is experiential is an important assertion, but it leaves much to be questioned. We must, for example, ask the age-old question: How many experiential things are there? One answer to this question, of course, is monism. Monism posits one self-sufficient entity, and it seeks to explain change and plurality as being modes or appearances of the one entity.[4] Now, Whitehead, too holds to a unity within reality. Indeed, he believes recognition of this unity to be monism's metaphysical strength.[5] The weakness of monism, in Whitehead's opinion, is its violation of the philosophical criterion of coherence. There is absolutely nothing in the nature of the self-sufficient One which might lead us, conceptually, to its modes; there is no reason why it should diversify itself.[6] Hence, if we are to maintain coherence, it seems we must hold that what is real is more than one, and that unity is an aspect of the multiplicity.[7]

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[4] I am indebted to Leclerc, pp. 53-80, for much of the outline and a part of the content of the discussion on actual entities in this section.

[5] AI 296 (231f.). [6] PR 10, 268. [7] PR 125.

Dualism and pluralism have had capable exponents. In the case of dualism, Descartes is a good example. According to him, there are two generically different actualities - thought and extension.[8] No one can deny a certain common-sense validity to this position, but, finally, it presents us with the same problem encountered in monism - it is incoherent. There is apparently no way that generically different entities can be interrelated. Therefore, there is no way that they can, conceptually, lead to or require one another.[9] This difficulty in fact arises whether the generically different things be two or many. So, from Whitehead's point of view, the incoherence of generic dualism extends to generic pluralism as well.

The remaining valid, metaphysical alternative would seem to be a pluralism of real things which are generically identical.[10] This is Whitehead's position. Whitehead designates these ultimates as "actual entities" or "actual occasions.[11] "Entity" simply means "thing," and is applicable to anything we may think about.[12] By "actual" Whitehead intends to suggest the fully real things.[13] He writes:

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[8] PR 116; A. N. Whitehead, Religion in the Making (New York: Macmillan, 1930), pp. 105f. (102f.). (The latter is cited hereafter as RM. Pagination in parentheses refers to the Meridian paperback edition.)

[9] PR 9f.

[10] I presume that one could posit only two such entities. In Whitehead's system such a situation is indeed possible, but after defining these final things more closely, we are apt to agree that there are a good many more.

[11] See PR 119 and 135 for his minor distinction between the two. Whitehead also uses the term "occasions of experience" to refer to this plurality, especially after Process and Reality.

> 'Actual entities'--also termed 'actual occasions'--are the final real things of which the world is made up. There is no going behind actual entities to find anything more real. They differ among themselves: God is an actual entity, and so is the most trivial puff of existence in far-off empty space. But, though there are gradations of importance, and diversities of function, yet in the principles which actuality exemplifies all are on the same level. The final facts are, all alike, actual entities; and these actual entities are drops of experience, complex and interdependent.[14]

Summarizing to this point, we have seen that, for Whitehead, reality is a plurality of experiences, or occasions of experience, called actual entities.

B. The Becoming of Actual Entities

One of the tasks of metaphysics is to account for the phenomenon we call change. How does change fit into the philosophical picture of a plurality of experiences presented by Whitehead?

In answering this question it is necessary to note that Whitehead accepts the line of thought first followed by Aristotle in opposition to Plato's non-actual world of forms. This principle, called by Whitehead the "ontological principle," asserts that actual entities are the only explanations of, or reasons for, anything. "It is a contradiction in terms to assume that some explanatory fact can float into the actual world out of nonentity. Nonentity is nothingness. Every explanatory fact refers to the decision and to the efficacy of an actual thing."[15] If we accept this principle, then, we shall be obliged to look only to actual entities for an explanation of change.

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[12] A. N. Whitehead, Science and the Modern World (New York: Macmillan, 1946), pp. 206f. (144). (Cited hereafter as SMW. Pagination in parentheses refers to the Mentor paperback edition.) Cf. A. N. Whitehead, The Concept of Nature (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1920), p. 8. (Cited hereafter as CN.)

[13] PR 27f., 68, 116. [14] PR 27f.

Usually, among those who have adhered to the entological principle, change has been attributed to the accidental variation of qualities adhering in a changeless, underlying substratum, which is the essential nature of the actual entity. In this way, it is maintained, both change and changelessness, or being and becoming, are seen to be properties of actual entities.

The first difficulty with this method of following the ontological principle is that it merely posits change, and nothing more; it does nothing to explain it. It is impossible to imagine anything in the nature of an actual entity, so conceived which could cause the change we so commonly observe. Therefore, Descartes, in whom this way of thinking reached its modern dominance, tried to explain change be appealing to God. But God is a generically different actual entity, and, as we have seen, such an appeal lacks coherence.

The second problem with positing an enduring, changeless subject of change is made clear by Hume's critique of

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[15] PR 73; cf. PR 27, 28, 36, 64f., 66, 68, 68, 73, 113, 116, 123, 223f., 352, 373, 382, 392.

Locke. There is a complete absence of experiential evidence for, or rational need of, a changeless substratum, whether with a sensationalist theory of perception or with Whitehead's own.[16] Finally, the idea of an underlying substratum is totally "inapplicable as an ultimate concept in physical analysis."[17] For these reasons, "the notion of an actual entity as the unchanging subject of change is completely abandoned."[18]

Once the idea of an essentially changeless entity is abandoned, whatever else the difficulty, we shall have no problem in accounting for change, for actual entities themselves may be considered changing, becoming or in process.[19] Change, from Whitehead's point of view, is of the essence of an actual occasion.

Previously we had concluded that reality, for Whitehead, is a plurality of actual entites. Now we may add that these actual entities are in process; they are becoming.[20] Thus, reality is a plurality of becoming actual occasions of experience.

C. The Atomicity of Actual Entities

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[16] See PR 85-94, passim, and 253.

[17] William Christian, An Interpretation of Whitehead's Metaphysics (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 109. See PR 121f.

[18] PR 43; cf. PR 44, 119-23.

[19] On the equivalence of these terms, in this context, see Leclerc, p. 69f.

[20] PR 65; AI 354 (273f.); MT 131, 133.

From Heraclitus on, the problems of process philosophy have seemed legion. They are made clear in the famous paradoxes of Zeno, and they become equally evident in questions as to how unity, changelessness and individuality can be consistently affirmed by a process philosophy. One of Zeno's arguments was directed against continuous motion, but it applies equally well to continuity of any kind. Essentially the argument is this: If we suppose two units in any continuum, continuity from the first to the second unit presupposes continuity from the first half to the second half of the first unit. This continuity, in turn, presupposes continuity from the first half to the second half of the first half of the first unit, etc., ad infinitum. Continuity, it plainly seems, is implausible.

Whitehead accepts Zeno's argument as applying without qualification to the kind of process Zeno had in mind. The idea of a "continuity of becoming"[21] or of a "continuous unfolding of a continuum"[22] is indeed inadequate. Process must be envisioned in another manner.

Whitehead's alternative conception of process is not easy to understand, perhaps, but it is essential to the acceptance of his position. Whitehead distinguishes the process of continuity from actual entity to actual entity (called "macrocosmic" process) from the process of becoming which each actual entity is within itself (called "microcosmic" process).[23]

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[21] PR 53

[22] A. N. Whitehead, "Time" in Proceedings of the Sixth International Congress of Philosophy (New York: Longmans, Green, 1927), quoted in Leclerc, p. 72. See PR 52f. and 105-07 for a discussion of Zeno's arguments. The summary of Whitehead's position in Leclerc, pp. 71-78, is a very good one.

The macrocosmic process is limited in its divisibility to the number of actual entities. This is true because the process of continuity is not a smooth flow, a "continuity of becoming" at all. It is, instead, the rhythmic succession of the becoming of actual occasions. Being limited in its divisibility, the macrocosmic process does not fall prey to the thrust of Zeno's argument.

The microcosmic process is the becoming which occurs "within' each actual entity. More precisely, becoming is the actual entity, its being or its essence. Each unit of becoming, though its region is divisible in principle (i.e., conceptually),[24] is itself in fact not divided and, hence, not in fact divisible. An actual entity becomes "all at once." There is no succession of points or moments in its becoming. There is no before and after within it.[25] Since the microcosmic process of becoming is factually undivided, it, too, is impervious to Zeno's criticism.

By maintaining the atomicity of occasions of becoming, Whitehead hopes to secure his doctrine of process against Zeno. At the same time, he believes, he has avoided the usual implication of process philosophy, that being, changelessness and individuality are mere appearances or illusions. For Whitehead these are not fictions; they are real attributes of each occasion of experience. Becoming is the being of an atomic occasion. An actual entity's unchanging character is the fact that it is precisely the moment of becoming that it is. Its individuality is the unique way in which it becomes.

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[23] PR 326. [24] PR 435

[25] This is not to say, however, that an actual entity does not "take up" space and time. On the contrary, its becoming is exactly what defines a particular region of space time. An actual entity, then, is spatio-temporally extensive, but its becoming is not successive.

Adding his affirmation of atomism to our former conclusion, we may now summarize Whitehead's position: The final elements of reality, actual entities, are a plurality of becoming, atomic occasions of experience. Whitehead writes:

> The actual temporal world can be analyzed into a multiplicity of occasions of actualization. These are the primary units of which the temporal world is composed. Call each such occasion an "epochal occasion." Then the actual world is a community of epochal occasions.[26]
>
> An epochal occasion is a concretion. It is a mode in which diverse elements come together into a real unity.... Thus an actual entity is the outcome of a creative synthesis, individual and passing.[27]

We have been considering certain features of actual entities which, in principle, might be ascribed to the ultimate monads of reality whether or not these final entities were experiential, as Whitehead suggests. Now we shall turn to a discussion of those features of Whitehead's philosophy relative to an understanding of actual entities, which rise to our attention finally because such occasions are in fact experiential. We may begin by determining what experience itself means, from Whitehead's point of view.

There are two basic facets of experience. First, ex--

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[26] RM 91 (88f.). [27] RM 92f. (90).

perience involves objectification--some manner of receiving an object, some manner, of taking it into account.[28] Secondly, experience includes a measure of self-contribution, self-functioning or "subjective immediacy."[29]

These two aspects of experience generally considered have corollaries in concrete occasions of experience. First, there is the relatedness of each actual entity to the objects of its feelings. In discussing this relatedness we must consider (a) the objects of those relations, i.e., other actual entities and eternal objects, and (b) the relations themselves, i.e., "prehensions." Secondly, there is the way in which an actual entity is a self-contributing unification of its objects. Whitehead's term for this unifying process is "concrescence."

Eternal Objects

An actual entity is a novel, momentary unit of experience. It is a unique synthesis of a unique past, never precisely repeated.

This conception of the fundamental elements of all reality enables us, Whitehead believes, to understand certain phenomena normally ignored, regarded as irrational, or as illusory. It is possible in this way to explain process without resorting to paradox, to conceive of change in a manner which is rational, and to account for the interaction of aspects of daily living often thought to be generically different, such as mind and matter.

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[28] AI 229f. (180f.); PR 320f.

[29] PR 38, 220. See Victor Lowe, "The Concept of Experience in Whitehead's Metaphysics," in George L. Kline, ed., Alfred North Whitehead: Essays on His Philosophy (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1963), pp. 124-33.

For the purposes of discussion at least, it may be conceded that, in a way gradually to become clearer, Whitehead's doctrine of epochal occasions really does provide the tools for a sensible philosophy of the flux of things. One stubborn fact of experience, however, forces us to insist that if this doctrine pretends to be the entire story of reality, it is the wrong one. For, to this point, Whitehead's theory of epochal entities fails to account for "sameness"--the persistence of identical qualities throughout a span of space-time.

The leaf of a tree, for example, or a segment of the human hand or brain, or the strand of continuing consciousness, or a stone--each of these is, in Whitehead's terminology, one of a variety of types of societies of successive occasions of experience. But if each is really composed of momentary units of experience, unique and unrepeatable, how can our usual assumption that here something identical persists be anything other than gross illusion?

Now Whitehead is not at all unaware of permanence, identity, or sameness, for he, too, notes that: "We do not experience mere succession. We discern forms of succession; and the presupposition of such forms haunts philosophic thought and dominates our daily experience."[30] Whitehead's explanation of these persisting forms brings us to an aspect of his thought somewhat akin to a traditional theory of universals--Whitehead's doctrine of "eternal objects." Indicating the relationship between sameness and eternal objects, Whitehead says:

> Objects convey the permanences recognized in events as self-identical amid different circumstances; that is to say, the same object is recognized in diverse events.[31]
>
> Objects are elements in nature which do not pass. The awareness of an object as some factor not sharing in the passage of nature is what I call "recognition." . . . Recognition is an awareness of sameness.[32]

An eternal object is an abstract possibility or potentiality[33] capable in principle of ingression[34] in any occasion of experience. In the categorical scheme, Whitehead speaks of eternal objects as "Pure Potentials for the Specific Determination of Fact, or Forms of Definiteness."[35] Later in Process and Reality, an eternal object is described as "any entity whose conceptual recognition does not involve a necessary reference to any definite actual entities of the temporal world. . . ."[36]

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[30] MT 114.

[31] A. N. Whitehead, An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Natural Knowledge (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1925), sections 15.1, 15.2. (Cited hereafter as PNK.)

[32] CN 143.

[33] Whitehead uses "possibility" and "potentiality" interchangeably with "eternal object." For references to possibility, see PR 46, 336-37, 421; SMW 229 (159). See PR 32, 63, 101-01, 225-26, 280, and MT 136 for references to potentiality.

[34] "Ingression" is Whitehead's term for the realization of an eternal object in an actual entity. See PR 34, 38, 63, 66.

[35] PR 32.

Professor William Christian offers a list of Whitehead's examples of eternal objects,[37] some of which are colors (eg., red), emotional qualities (eg., anger, or love), mathematical forms (eg., triplicity), relationships (eg., before, or greater), grades of generic abstraction (eg., redness, or color), and the abstract essence of an actual entity. In fact, every constituent of an actual entity is capable of being analyzed as the exemplification of an eternal object. "There is no character belonging to the actual apart from its exclusive determination by selected eternal objects."[38]

Eternal objects are abstract. They are not first something real apart from actual entities, which then become ingredient in occasions of experience. Eternal objects are "ideal entities, or forms, which are themselves not actual, but are such that they are exemplified in everything that is actual. . . ."[39]

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[36] PR 170. [37] Christian, pp. 202f.

[38] PR 367. This statement from Whitehead, and mine preceding it, are both incorrect if we take the "actuality" of an actual occasion to be a constituent of it or a character belonging to it. There is no eternal object "actuality." (See below, p. 51, footnote 69.). To ignore this fact is to overlook the finality of both actuality and potentiality in Whitehead's system, and to reduce Whitehead's view of process to a philosophy of potentiality and its modes or expressions.

[39] RM 90 (88). This feature of Whitehead's doctrine is in contrast to the platonic theory of a realm of forms which have real being in isolation from the world of temporal entities. See MT 92f.

Precisely because they are abstract, eternal objects are something in themselves apart from inclusion in any specific actual entity.[40] That is to say, although an eternal object or a possibility is a non-entity apart from some actuality, it is entirely comprehensible (in principle) apart from its being ingredient in a particular actual entity. This is what Whitehead has in mind when he refers to eternal objects as being "indeterminate" or "transcendent."[41]

Eternal objects are eternal--they do not come into reality; they do not pass away.[42] Their being is not their becoming, as in the case with actual entities. The being of an eternal object, a possibility, is its unalterable self-identity which is not subject to change.[43]

Prehensions

A consideration of the objects of an actual entity's experience leads us to discuss other actual entities, and eternal objects. When we turn to discuss the way an actual entity is related to these objects of its experience, we arrive at Whitehead's doctrine of prehensions. Whitehead uses the term

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[40] PR 42, 70, 240, 366f., 391f.; SMW 228f. (159).

[41] See eg., PR 366f. This element of Whitehead's doctrine distinguishes his view from an extreme temporalism which, as Christian notes, relegates potentiality to actuality. (See Christian, pp. 196-200.)

[42] PR 33, 63f., 514; SMW 126 (88).

[43] PNK 15.1, 15.2; CN 143-44; SMW 126 (88), 248 (172f.).

"prehension"

> for the general way in which the occasion of experience can include, as part of its own essence, any other entity, whether another occasion of experience or an entity of another type. This term is devoid of suggestion either of consciousness or of representative perception.[44]

In the categorical scheme, Whitehead calls prehensions "Concrete Facts of Relatedness."[45] One actual entity, he says, or one aspect in the process of unification of an actual entity, is related to another by its "re-enactment"[46] or its "reproduction"[47] of the same eternal object determinant of its predecessor.[48]

Prehensions may be either positive (as the ones described above) or negative. "A negative prehension holds its datum as inoperative"[49] through elimination,[50] but it does not thereby totally dissolve the relatedness between prehended and prehending entity.[51] Positive prehensions, also called "feelings,"[52] "contribute their 'subjective forms'[53] and their data to the formation" of the becoming occasion.[54] Directly and indirectly, through its positive and negative prehensions "each actual entity includes the universe."[55]

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[44] AI 300 (235); cf. AI 295-300 (231-35); PR 29, 79f., 81f.; SMW 101 (70).

[45] PR 32.

[46] PR 375.

[47] PR 28. Some of the other terms Whitehead uses to characterize prehensions are "absorption" (PR 82), "mediation" (PR 230), "transformation" (PR 235), "appropriation" (PR 249), "conformation" (PR 364), "objectification" (PR 80), and "concern" (AI 226 (178)).

[48] PR 364.

[49] PR 35.

[50] PR 338, 353.

[51] PR 66.

[52] PR 35; AI 300f. (235).

[53] See below, p. 57f. on "subjective forms."

[54] PR 39. Although Whitehead occasionally lapses into such expressions, strictly speaking, prehensions do not "hold" or "contribute." Prehensions do not do anything. Only actual entities act; only actual entities prehend positively and negatively.

If we classify prehensions, not according to the relevance of the datum to the prehending occasion (as we did in distinguishing positive and negative prehensions), but instead according to the type of datum involved, we discover two other basic types of prehensions, and several derivative types.[56] These two fundamental types are called physical prehensions,[57] and conceptual (or mental) prehensions.[58] Whitehead defines them as follows:

> Prehensions of actual entities--i.e., prehensions whose data involve actual entities--are termed 'physical prehensions'; and prehensions of eternal objects are termed 'conceptual prehensions.'[59]

A prehension is "called 'physical' when its datum involves objectification of other actual entities."[60] Thus, an actual entity, C, would be related to its predecessor, actual entity B, by a physical prehension of B.

A 'simple physical prehension' has as its datum "only one actual entity, and this actual entity is objectified by one of its feelings."[61] Such prehensions provide the only mode of relatedness between actual entities, and provide the raw material for the more complex forms of feeling which evolve in the course of each new experiential synthesis.[62]

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[55] PR 71-72; cf. PR 79. [56] PR 365.

[57] PR 343, 355, 361, 275, 469. [58] PR 280, 355, 366.

[59] PR 35. [60] PR 375. [61] PR 375. [62] PR 361-62.

A 'pure physical prehension' is one of two types of simple physical prehensions.[63] "In a 'pure physical feeling' the actual entity which is the datum is objectified by one of its own physical feelings"[64] Thus, if actual entity C is related to B by its prehension of B's feeling of a third actual entity, A, then C's feeling of B is a pure physical feeling. In a sense, then, this type of prehension is a physical feeling of a physical feeling.

Pure physical feelings comprize the vast majority of relationships between actual entities. Almost every new synthesis of feelings is overwhelmingly constituted by the physical feelings of physical feelings--prehensions re-enacting data carried almost endlessly from actual entity to actual entity. Such relationships, for example, are manifest as "the transference of energy in the physical world."[65]

A 'hybrid physical prehension' is the second type of simple physical prehension.[66] Since, however, in "a hybrid physical feeling the actual entity forming the datum is objectified by one of its own conceptual feelings,"[67] we had best defer our discussion of this type of feeling until we have dealt with conceptual feelings.

A 'conceptual prehension,' also called a 'mental prehension,' is the second basic type of prehension.[68] It is the prehension of an eternal object,[69] the entertainment of a possibility in its general and abstract "capacity for being a real-determinant of process."[70] In speaking of such prehensions as "mental" or "conceptual" Whitehead is not necessarily, or even usually, suggesting that some sort of consciousness is involved. The chief characteristic of mentality or conceptuality, as

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[63] PR 375. [64] PR 375. [65] PR 375f. [66] PR 375.

[67] PR 376.

[68] Pure conceptual feelings are limited to the internal

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process of an occasion's becoming. In contrast to physical prehensions, conceptual prehensions never relate one actual entity to another. See PR 343, 377, 378, 383.

[69] It is true, of course, that a physical prehension, also, has an eternal object as its datum, at least in the sense that it is a prehension of an occasion of experience manifesting certain eternal possibilities. But this cannot be construed to mean that a physical feeling is only the enjoyment of an eternal object, for an actual entity is not simply a composite of possibilities. Over and above the totality of eternal objects exemplified in any actual occasion is that occasion's actuality. And actuality is not a realized possibility; there is, in Whitehead's system, no eternal object "actuality."

Admittedly, nowhere does Whitehead clearly make such a statement, but the alternative would force Whitehead to subsume actuality to potentiality in the manner of Plato, and to reduce experience to a flux of qualities or universals in the manner of Hume. One cannot adequately understand either Whitehead's general philosophy or his specific doctrine of prehensions without taking his juxtaposition of actuality and potentiality to be fundamental to his position.

[70] PR 366f. A conceptual prehension is of a possibility in a complete abstraction from the question of whether that eternal possibility has or has not received prior exemplification. Hence Professor Stephen C. Pepper's statement that "a 'conceptual prehension' . . . is the intuition of an original idea never actualized in the world before is true, but not exhaustive. (See his "Whitehead's 'Actual Occasion'" in Studies in Whitehead's Philosophy ("Tulane Studies in Philosophy," Vol. X; New Orleans: Tulane University Press, 1961), p. 86.) Some conceptual prehensions do involve previously unrealized eternal objects, for novelty is only introduced through the conceptual or mental pole. But it is by no means true that every eternal object enjoyed in complete abstraction from any realization of it is always novel.

Whitehead uses the terms, is the entertainment of pure possibility, of genuine novelty. The basic evidence, I suppose, that this sort of thing occurs in plainly unconscious actual entities, eg., in the successive molecular occasions constituting the molecule of a stone, is the fact that novelty does occur on this level, however small and seldom it may be. Possibility, in other words, does play a role in the succession of actual entities comprising this low level of reality.[71]

Whitehead speaks of one occasion's (physical) prehension of another actual occasion's conceptual prehension as a "hybrid physical prehension," as we noted above. In all of nature below the level of consciousness, hybrid physical prehension probably seldom, if ever, occur. Moreover, even in the realm of consciousness, pure physical feelings predominate the relatedness of occasions of experience not belonging to the same personally ordered society. To be sure, it is true that "I" (i.e., one occasion of the succession of occasions of experience constituting my conscious life) may apprehend in another "person" (i.e., an occasion belonging to the route forming another person's conscious self) the entertainment of the pure possibility, "joy" (i.e., the entertainment of the eternal object "joy" apart from any particular manifestation of that emotion). But this still would not necessarily or even usually be a hybrid prehension, for most of the time "I" would be aware of that eternal object first with reference to its exemplification in a preceeding actual entity or "person," and only later (in phase two of the process of concrescence, to be described below) as abstracted from that and any other actual entity. Whitehead, nevertheless, does believe that there is some considerable evidence for the occurrence of hybrid physical prehensions, both in "peculiar instances of telepathy, and . . . (in) the instinctive apprehension of a tone of feeling in ordinary social intercourse.[72]

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[71] The prehension of an eternal object in its general and abstract capacity for being realized, which we have been discussing, is called a "pure conceptual prehension." There is another kind of conceptual feeling which Whitehead sometimes calls an "impure conceptual feeling." It is the enjoyment of a possibility in reference to its possible exemplification (as distinct from its actual exemplification, which would be a physical feeling). In Whitehead's words: "An 'impure' prehension arises from the integration of a 'pure' conceptual prehension [i.e., a prehension of an eternal object] with a physical prehension [i.e., a prehension of an actual entity]. . . ." (PR 280. See the discussion below, p. 63, on "propositional feelings" which are impure prehensions.)

As is evident from speaking of it as an "integration," an impure conceptual feeling is not strictly a conceptual feeling at all. The same impure prehension may be called mental or physical, depending upon whether the primary interest is in the conceptual or physical element of the contrast. (See PR 49.)

Hybrid prehensions, though rare in nature considered as a whole, are common within an individual's personal experience. Indeed, the serial transmission of a particular type of hybrid feeling from occasion to occasion is the essence of the human self. According to Whitehead, the psyche is a society of successive occasions of experience throughout which is repeated certain definitive mental characteristics. These mental characteristics are the conceptual feelings which each becoming occasion prehends from its predecessor. And this prehension is of course what Whitehead means by "hybrid"--"the prehension by one subject of a conceptual prehension, or of an 'impure' prehension, belonging to the mentality of another subject."[73]

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[72] PR 469. Whether hybrid prehensions of this sort in fact occur is, for Whitehead, an empirical question, not a metaphysical one. As my illustration above implies, I believe that the second type of evidence cited by Whitehead might often be explained by a pure physical prehension and the later derivation of a conceptual feeling from the physical one.

Concrescence

Turning from the ways in which an actual entity is related to its objects (i.e., either eternal objects or other actual entities) through its prehensions, to consider the manner in which a becoming occasion unifies these diverse prehensions, we arrive at Whitehead's doctrine of the concrescence of an occasion of experience.

"Concrescence," writes Whitehead, "is the name for the process in which the universe of many things acquires an individual unity . . . in the constitution of the novel 'one.'"[74]

Before we discuss systematically what is involved in this definition, several general remarks of an explanatory nature may be of some help.[75] First, this microscopic process is each actual entity; it is an occasion of experience considered as the unification of the past. Secondly, concrescence is the process of taking a disjunctively diverse datum and 're-arranging' it into one comprehensive unity.[76] Third, each process is peculiar to the actual entity which it is. It expresses how that single entity is a unification of its diverse datum.[77] Fourth, the datum of a concrescence is not only composed of immediately past occasions; all of the past is mediately prehended, negatively or positively, vaguely or vividly.[78] Fifth, the process of concrescence is private.[79] On the one hand, this means that the influence of the present is excluded from an occasion's becoming. Atomic becoming is the integration of feelings derived only from past occasions. In short, there is no commerce between contemporaries.[80] On the other hand, the privacy of concrescence means that once unification has begun, all past influence, too, is ceased. Sixth, the process of becoming is a "process of 'feeling.' In feeling, what is felt is not

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[73] PR 163. (See below, p. 68 on the human self.)

[74] PR 321.

[75] Analyzing the phases of concrescence is called the "genetic division" of an actual entity. This, Whitehead tells us, is only one of two ways of 'dividing' an occasion of experience (PR 433ff.). Genetic division views the entity as a

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process, seeing how the prehensions in the becoming of the occasion are interrelated. "Coordinate division," which is the second means of division, analyzes the occasion as having completed its process by achieving its "satisfaction," (see below, pp. 64f.) thus becoming an object for succeeding concrescences. Coordinate division, that is, examines possible modes of relatedness between actual entities--an analysis which results in Whitehead's mathematical physics.)

[76] PR 32. [77] PR 232, 321.

[78] PR 33, 71f., 232. It is not metaphysically necessary that the past be mediately prehended. Whitehead views the immediate prehension of non-contiguous occasions as a distinct possibility. (See PR 469.)

[79] PR 232. [80] PR 95, 188; AI 251 (197).

necessarily analyzed. . . . Understanding is a special form of feeling."[81] Seventh, the phases of process in the concrescence are not in physical time. Physical time is the succession of completed concrescences.[82]

Whitehead admits that his discussion of concrescence "involves a hypothetical, propositional point of view."[83] It has the function of Plato's 'likely tale,' told primarily, not to describe in "play by play" fashion how occasions do in fact become, but how we can understand the relationship of the various possible results which actual entities do represent. But, speculative or not, this discussion is really quite crucial, for it is here that Whitehead must face some important questions. We must ask, for example, whether in his theory of concrescence Whitehead is able to allow for human freedom as well as for some kind of natural determinism, and whether he is able to take into account such experienced extremes as mentality and materiality without violating his affirmation of the generic unity of things. Even more important for us, however, is the fact that in the theory of concrescence (particularly in his view of the "first phase" of concrescence) we begin to get an idea of how God influences the becoming of each occasion. If Whitehead's theory at this point is in accordance with our own experience, then Whitehead's "hypothetical...point of view" could claim to be adequate to the facts, at the very least. It is this question of adequacy that we must keep in mind as we turn to consider Whitehead's doctrine of the concrescence of an occasion of experience.[84]

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[81] PR 233; see also PR 232f.

[82] PR 434. See above, pp. 40-43.

[83] PR 360; see also PR 359-60.

The initial phase (called the primary, conformal, or receptive phase) of the concrescence of an actual entity begins with that occasion's physical prehensions. Among these manifold feelings, collectively called the "initial datum,"[85] is one hybrid feeling of God.[86] The object of this prehension is God's conceptual valuation of the possibilities relevant to the concrescing occasion in question - a valuation which constitutes the ideal possibility of becoming for that actual occasion.[87] This is the goal toward which God, so to speak, seeks to lure that occasion. It is called the "initial aim."[88] The total initial datum as given composes what might be called one aspect (say, the "datum" aspect)[89] of the first phase of concrescence.

A second, but simultaneous, aspect (the "subjective response" aspect)[90] of the primary phase, is the way in which the becoming entity feels each of these prehended feelings.

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[84] The following discussion is based very largely upon Professor Donald Sherburne's treatment of this topic in chapter three of his A Whiteheadian Aesthetic (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961.). In my view, the clarity of Dr. Sherburne's presentation is unsurpassed, even by Whitehead's own discussion.

[85] PR 361f. [86] PR 343. [87] PR 343, 373f.

[88] PR 342f. [89] PR 179. [90] PR 179.

The concrescing occasion, for example, may feel "patience" of the "idea of redness" with "approval" or "rebellion." This 'how' of feeling is called the becoming occasion's "subjective form" of feeling the datum.[91] In the first phase, the novel occasion's subjective form is determined by the interaction of the unique combination of feelings which that occasion is,[92] including the important feeling of the initial aim, and the subjective forms of the objects from which these feelings were derived.[93] The initial datum as felt with a subjective form is called the "objective datum."[94] Put otherwise, the objective datum is the initial-datum-as-perspectivally-prehended.

The initial-aim-as perspectivally-prehended is called the "subjective aim."[95] The subjective aim is the occasion's prehended ideal for itself as a completed whole;[96] it represents what the actual entity 'thinks' it 'ought' to be.

When acquired in the first phase of concrescence,[97] the subjective aim is a very complex eternal object allowing for a multiplicity of options of becoming in graded order. Its successive determination is the elimination of alternatives incompatible with its path of becoming in progressive stages.[98] Each of these stages, in the more precise determination of the form of the subjective aim to be realized, is guided (but not determined) by the subjective aim in its more general form in the preceding phase of concrescence.[99]

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[91] PR 354. [92] PR 354. [93] PR 466. [94] PR 361f.

[95] PR 37, 130, 134, 254, 320, 342f. [96] PR 108.

[97] PR 342. [98] PR 74, 75, 342, 343.

In its original general form, the subjective aim is a given; it is determined by the divinely evaluated order of possible achievements for that particular occasion, and by that occasion's own form of receiving the "divine vision." The subjective aim, in its initial, general form, is the predetermined criterion by which all of the becoming occasion's own free decisions--even decisions which effect the more specific determination of the subjective aim--are made. And exactly because the concrescing actual entity itself makes decisions (i.e., because it is in part the cause of the way it becomes), the subjective aim does not determine the result of any phase of the process or the process as a whole.[100] Whitehead writes: The

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[99] PR 359, 420.

[100] It should be evident that Whitehead thinks that no particular form of the subjective aim is unavoidably realized, since the subjective aim does not determine the concrescence. At most, it only 'entices' or 'lures' the concrescence toward a particular goal. Hence, when Professor Pepper says "The subjective aim directs the concrescent process to the integrated satisfaction," he must mean "directs" in the sense of "determines," rather than of "lures," for he goes on erroneously to conclude that "The terminal phase is incipient in the initial phase and bound to be achieved" (Pepper, p. 85; my underling.). Many terminal phases are incipient in the first phase, but no one in particular is bound to be achieved.

Professor Mays is also in error on this score, I believe. (See Mays, pp. 224-28.) He wrongly equates the subjective aim with the occasion's self-determination (p. 227). Then he incorrectly claims that 'self-determination' is only a word which Whitehead oddly uses to confine our attention to the region of the entity's concrescence, methodologically ignoring the prior occasions upon which the becoming occasion actual entity "derives from God its basic conceptual aim, relevant to its actual world, yet with indeterminations _awaiting its own decisions_."[101] Again: "The point to be noticed is that the actual entity, in a state of process during which it is not fully definite, _determines its own ultimate definiteness_. This is the whole point of moral responsibility. Such responsibility is conditioned by the limits of the data, and by the categoreal conditions of concrescence."[102]

Phases two, three, and four, called the supplemental phases of an entity's concrescence, are not as crucial as the first phase in setting a context for understanding Whitehead's doctrine of God, but they do indicate how Whitehead views the origin of diversity in generically identical actual entities. Phase two is the stage of conceptual feelings. In this particular stage, a conceptual feeling arises having as its datum an eternal object which has been abstracted from a physical feeling. This conceptual feeling is 'pure' because the eternal object it exemplifies has no specific referent, i.e., the eternal object, at this point, is held in complete abstraction from its actual exemplification in the original physical feeling and from its possible exemplification in that or any other

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is _solely_ dependent for its character (p. 226). Hence, he can but wrongly conclude that Whitehead's doctrine of self-causation is not so different from physical determinism after all (p. 227).

[101] PR 343; my underlining.

[102] PR 390; underlining mine. Cf. also PR 75, 135, 168, 338, 339.

feeling.[103] The derivation of a conceptual feeling from a physical feeling marks the presence of the mental pole of the becoming occasion.[104]

A second and simultaneous aspect of this second phase has to do with the subjective forms of the derived conceptual feelings. All of these feelings are compatible with each other by virtue of the "unity of their subject"[105] But all of these datum feelings are not capable of playing an equally dominant role in the completed occasion. Thus, in the second aspect of phase two, the derived conceptual feelings are valued up ("adversion") or down ("aversion"), the decision being guided by the entity's subjective aim. This complete operation is called "conceptual valuation."[106]

Also in this second phase, two other important operations may occur, and always do in higher organisms. The first, called "conceptual reversion,"[107] accounts for the actualization of genuine novelty and error in process. The second, "transmutation,"[108] explains our experience of physical objects as unities rather than as societies of millions of occasions of experience.

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[103] The physical feeling from which the object of the conceptual feeling is abstracted continues to be a factor in the concrescence. See, eg., PR 396.

[104] PR 379. The reader will be much less puzzled by this language if he will remember that "feeling" can mean only the influence of the past upon the present, and that 'mental' may mean only the presence of an abstract possibility. To forget this makes the application of this hypothetical account to the molecular occasions of a leaf, for example, quite incredible.

[105] PR 39. [106] PR 367-69, 379f., 388.

[107] PR 40, 380ff. [108] PR 40, 384ff.

Normally, of course, the derived conceptual feeling would have as its object the same eternal object as that ingressed in the original physical feeling. In conceptual reversion, however, an alteration occurs; the object of the conceptual feeling is partly like, but also partly unlike the eternal object in the original physical feeling. In succeeding phases of concrescence, the novel (i.e., reverted) eternal object is substituted for the eternal object which is exemplified in the original physical prehension. An example of the results of this operation in conscious perception might be the mistaking of one shade of a color for another, or the assumption that a mirage is real.

In transmutation, distinct actual entities having ingredient in themselves identical eternal objects are prehended as a unity by a single conceptual prehension, the object of which is the single eternal object ingressed in all of the distinct entities. In this way, a white rock is viewed by us, not as the multitude of white molecular occasions which we know it to be, but as one white datum.

We enter phase three of the becoming of an occasion with a contrast--that between the conceptual feeling of an eternal object (which may or may not be transmuted and (or reverted) and the original physical feeling to which it is related. In this stage, called the phase of simple comparative feelings, this contrast is integrated by virtue of a single feeling of both components.[109] This is a "simple comparative feeling."

In the vast majority of actual entities, the simple comparative feeling is of the type called a "physical purpose."[110] In a physical purpose, the eternal object of the conceptual feeling is simply identified with that of the original physical feeling. The becoming occasion is then completed, having only repeated its datum (except, of course, in the case of physical mutations through conceptual reversion) in a novel spatio-temporal region. Clearly, all that Whitehead has claimed for the great mass of actual occasions comprizing the physical world is (a) that they are unifications of past influences, (b) that this process of unification has a goal, and (c) that it always includes the possibility of novelty which is generally never actualized. In saying that such entities involve mentality, Whitehead is not giving them minds or consciousness. They are "the mere vehicles for the transference of inherited constitutions of feeling."[111]

In higher actual entities, if the feeling of the contrast between the abstracted eternal object (transmuted and/or reverted, or neither) and the original physical feeling will give rise to further, complex comparative feelings, then that contrast is called a "proposition," and the feeling of it is a "propositional feeling" or "theory."[112]

The complex comparative feelings, called "intellectual feelings,"[113] constitute the fourth phase. An intellectual feeling is the prehension of the contrast, termed a "generic contrast,"[114] between a propositional feeling and the relative physical feeling, when the subjective form of that feeling embodies the eternal object "consciousness."[115] Many kinds of intellectual feelings are discussed by Whitehead. In general they fall into two main classes with several derivative types, the diversity of which is dependent upon the variety of propositional feelings in the third phase of concrescence.[116]

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[109] PR 380. [110] PR 421ff. [111] PR 325. [112] PR 139ff.

The completion of the becoming of an actual occasion, called the satisfaction, is not simply another phase of the microscopic process.[117] Satisfaction is that process in its total unity. Whitehead figuratively pictures the satisfaction as a "halt" in process[118] when "Time has stood still - if only it could."[119] Three remarks may help to clarify this notion.

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[113] PR 406ff. [114] PR 406.

[115] PR 369-72, 391, 399, 407f. Only in the very few actual occasions which reach this stage is what we ordinarily call "mind" claimed to be present. Whitehead prefers to avoid the use of the term "mind" when possible, since the word "conveys the suggestion of independent substance" (PR 326). When he does use "mind" he means by it nothing other than the operation of the mental pole, which does not necessarily involve consciousness (PR 130), and which is a far broader use of the term than is given it in everyday conversation. Most of the time, when Whitehead refers to what is commonly meant by "mind," he used the term "consciousness." (See PR 245f. 286, 369-72.)

[116] See PR 406-28. Cf. Sherburne, pp. 62-68.

[117] PR 323, See Christian, pp. 21-38, for a thorough discussion of the satisfaction.

[118] PR 340; MT 139. [119] PR 233.

First, the satisfaction is the actual entity in its fully determinate state, determinate with relation to its total world. "All indeterminations respecting the potentialities of the universe are definitely solved so far as concerns the satisfaction of the subject in question."[120] Secondly, the satisfaction of an occasion is "one complex unity of feeling."[121] This follows from the fact that an actual entity is a process of unifying into one feeling the diverse feelings of its datum.[122] Finally, the satisfaction "embodies what the actual entity is beyond itself,"[123] i.e., as a "superject,"[124] or as it will function in "objective immortality."[125] In other words, how the occasion of experience singly feels the many feelings it combines, becomes one of the stubborn facts which determines an aspect of the actual world for future occasions.[126]

Secondary Elements of Whitehead's Philosophy

We have been dealing with certain features of actual entities which, due partly to our purpose and partly to Whitehead's system, have seemed of major importance. There are however, three other categories which are also essential for an understanding of Whitehead's doctrine of God. They are creativity, the extensive continuum, and societies.

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[120] PR 234.

[121] PR 337; cf. also PR, 322.

[122] PR 233.

[123] PR 335.

[124] PR 71, 129.

[125] PR 44, 94.

[126] PR 227.

Creativity--In Whitehead's earlier writings, there is considerable evidence that the term "creativity" referred to a reality which is actual in the same sense that occasions of experience are actual. However, at least by the time of Science and the Modern World, (1925) this was no longer true.[127] There, and in Process and Reality, creativity is a principle; it is an abstraction, a generalization from the self-creating character of actual entities.[128] It lies in the very nature of an actual entity (a) to create a unity out of a diversity of feelings,[129] and (b) to contribute itself to the diversity which is the object of further unification.[130] (a) accounts for both metaphysical unity, and for the existence of each occasion, i.e., it is the foundation of the microscopic process. (b) accounts for both metaphysical diversity, and for the ongoingness of reality, i.e., it is the foundation of the microscopic process. "Creativity" is the term referring to the abstraction of these two characteristics of an actual occasion of experience.[131]

The Extensive Continuum--Each actual occasion occupies a spatio-temporal region. The totality of entities may also be said to occupy a network of related spatio-temporal regions. As aspects of actual entities, these regions are very real indeed. But in themselves, they are only potentialities - potentialities for being occupied. Without actual entities, there would be no space-time, hence no regions of space-time.

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[127] See eg. SMW 177; cf. RM 89. [128] See PR 46f.

[129] PR 38, 135. [130] PR 33.

[131] Leclerc, pp. 81-87, read in the light of Sherburne's discussion, pp. 13-24, makes a very good introduction to Whitehead's doctrine of creativity. Mays, pp. 64f, apparently takes creativity to refer only to microcosmic process.

Regions can, however, be abstracted in thought. We can thus speak of how the network of spatio-temporal regions is actually divided by actual entities in objective immortality, how it might have been divided differently by different actual occasions, and how division might occur in future becoming occasions. The object of such abstract, geometrical and mathematical considerations is what Whitehead refers to as the extensive continuum.[132]

Societies of Actual Occasions--The closest we come to observing distinct actual occasions is our "almost awareness" of the atomic moments which make up our conscious experience. What we ordinarily observe, according to Whitehead, are various groupings of occasions of experience. Any grouping of related entities (many or few, conscious or not) is called a "nexus" of actual entities.[133] A "society" of actual entities is a nexus with "social order."[134] A nexus exhibits social order when there is a "common element of form illustrated in the definiteness of each of its included actual entities."[135] Any object defined by some pervasive characteristic--eg. a tree, a rock, mental experience, a molecule, etc.--would serve as an example. Obviously, some societies are quite different from others. Our own mental life, and the existence of a molecule, has a seriality (i.e., only one occasion occurs at a time) which a rock, or a tree seems not to have. In these latter cases, there is no unique relationship between any event in the whole and its immediate predecessor. The character of seriality is called a "personal order,"[136] but it is not necessarily conscious.[137] A society with personal order is called an "enduring object."[138]

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[132] See PR 103-05. W. Mays takes some of the statements in this passage to suggest that the extensive continuum is an actuality which occasions occupy. See Mays, chapter six, esp. 112. If the context of the passage in Process and Reality is insufficient to warn us against May's interpretation of Whitehead, we surely ought to be convinced that it cannot be correct by recalling Whitehead's ontological principle. In my view, Robert M. Palter, Whitehead's Philosophy of Science (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), pp. 110ff. gives a clearer and more balanced account of Whitehead's view of the extensive continuum.

[133] PR 30. [134] PR 50.

Often we observe objects which seem to be societies of enduring objects, i.e., societies of societies with personal order. A tree, exhibiting individual parts, or an animal body, is a society of enduring objects. Whitehead calls these "corpuscular societies."[139] When we consider the corpuscular society which is the human body, together with the continuing self we call the personality, we have a slightly altered picture. In this society there is one serial order of occasions, known commonly as the "psyche" or the "self," which seems to dominate the others to varying degrees.[140] A society which has one dominant member is called a "monarchical society."

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[135] PR 50f.

[136] PR 51.

[137] PR 52.

[138] PR 51.

[139] PR 52.

[140] This dominant enduring object (also called a "historic route of occasions" and a "personally ordered society" is not always conscious, and when it is, it is never totally so (PR 408).

CHAPTER IV

WHITEHEAD'S DOCTRINE OF GOD: I

Because speculative conclusions inevitably are based upon hypotheses, they are incapable of proof.[1] The most, therefore, that one ought to claim for such conclusions is that they seem more adequate than others to illumine any and all of the facets of our experience. This is true of the doctrines discussed in the preceding chapter. It is also true of any other doctrines which seem logically to follow from those we have been discussing. So if we examine the systematic implications of Whitehead's doctrine of process, what we shall reach is another doctrine (or a group of doctrines) just as incapable of proof as that from which it was derived. The test of this derivative doctrine, too, is not its correspondence to some preconceived notion of the way we think things ought to be, but rather its ability to explain our experience in the most adequate, coherent and consistent manner available.

This is precisely the place of Whitehead's doctrine of God in his philosophical system. Whitehead is not able to prove the truth of his doctrine, nor does he wish to do so. He only contends that *if* we accept other of his views, such as those discussed in the last chapter, considerations seem to him to arise which require us to develop a doctrine of God.[2]

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[1] See above, pp. 20-22

In order to make this clear, let us examine the status of pure possibilities, i.e., eternal objects as yet unrealized in the temporal process, in Whitehead's system. In some sense, of course, these possibilities are real. To be at all, however, according to Whitehead's ontological principle, is to be either an actual entity or an aspect of an actual entity.[3] Eternal objects are not actual entities, hence they must be aspects of actual entities. Those eternal objects which are temporally unactualized, i.e., non-temporal, must be aspects of an actual entity which is at least partially non-temporal itself.[4] In sum, _if_ we follow Whitehead and Aristotle against Plato, in adhering to the so-called ontological principle, and _if_ we agree that pure potentiality has some kind of reality, it seems necessary that we posit the existence of a non-temporal actual entity which includes all eternal objects, establishing thereby their ontological reality.

When we turn from the question of the ontological status of eternal objects, to the problem of their connection to temporal occasions of experience, we find ourselves again compelled to assert some kind of a God. The reason for this is clear. Although the nature of a temporal occasion requires the ingression of eternal objects, nothing in a momentary actual entity can account for the availability of the realm of eternal objects for ingression in actual occasions; finite actuality, in other words, cannot establish the relatedness of actuality and potentiality. Yet, presumably, the relationship does exist. It is necessary, therefore, to assume that the "two sets are mediated by a thing which combines the actuality of what is temporal with the timelessness of what is potential."[5] Now since only actual entities are efficacious, according to the ontological principle,[6] that which serves as the mediator must be an actual entity which combines actuality and nontemporality in its own nature.[7] In sum, _if_ we accept the ontological principle, and _if_ we agree that potentiality has some relationship to actuality, then we are apparently bound to assume the reality of an actual entity embracing both potentiality and actuality in order to make that relationship possible.

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[2] See, eg., SMW 249f. (174). [3] PR 73. [4] PR 73, 530.

In these ways, Whitehead is obliged by his own view of the temporal process to develop a concept of an actual entity which includes both potentiality and actuality. As he attempts to do this, Whitehead is also forced by his desire for philosophical coherence to uphold his doctrine of the generic identity of all actual entities. Now in fact Whitehead does affirm both the dual nature of God,[8] and the fact that, far from being generically unlike other actual entities,[9] God is the chief exemplification of the metaphysical principles.[10] Our interest, however, is not simply in the fact that Whitehead makes such assertions, but also in how these affirmations are elaborated systematically. Thus we must enter into the detail of Whitehead's doctrine of God.

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[5] PR 64. [6] PR 64. [7] PR 48, 63f.

[8] See PR 54. [9] PR 116. [10] PR 521.

The Primordial Nature of God

It seems inevitable that we start our consideration of Whitehead's theology with a discussion of what Whitehead calls God's "primordial nature." This procedure seems proper because this aspect of his view of God was the first to arise in Whitehead's own thought. Moreover, in some sense, the primordial nature of God is prior in God's own being (though this priority is undoubtedly not a temporal one).[11] Unlike finite entities, Whitehead tells us, God originates from his mental pole, his primordial aspect.[12] Indeed, this seems to be the major reason for ascribing to this aspect of God's being the character of primordiality.[13] The first step in understanding Whitehead's doctrine of God, then, ought to be to ask: What is the primordial nature of God, and what is its role?

The primordial nature is at least the mere relatedness or the togetherness of the entire realm of eternal objects in God's conceptual realization--"togetherness in the formal constitution of a non-temporal actuality."[14] Whitehead indicates this in several statements. The primordial nature, he says, is God's complete "envisagement" of eternal objects;[15] it is "the unity of relevance of the many potential forms";[16] it is God's "ideal"[17] or "conceptual realization of the absolute wealth of potentiality."[18]

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[11] See PR 521

[12] PR 54, 524.

[13] See, eg., PR 46, 47, 116, 134, 522, 524.

[14] PR 48.

This minimal characteristic of the primordial nature fulfills the two important metaphysical requirements just discussed.[19] By establishing the conjunction of all eternal objects in an actual entity, the primordial nature (a) guarantees the ontological status of possibilities, because they are eternally aspects of an eternal actual entity,[20] and (b) it makes the eternal objects available to temporal occasions, because they are aspects of an actual entity, God--aspects which may be objectified in the temporal occasion's prehension of God.[21] In this latter respect, the primordial nature is the source of novelty.[22]

The relatedness or togetherness of eternal objects is surely important to Whitehead's concept of the primordial nature, but most of Whitehead's statements on the subject suggest that considerably more is involved in this aspect of God. We can best understand this additional element in God's conceptual envisagement, I believe, if we begin with a consideration of that characteristic of process which seems to require it.

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[15] PR 49f., 70. [16] PR 529. [17] PR 64.

[18] PR 521; cf. also PR 530. [19] See above, pp. 69-71.

[20] PR 73. [21] PR 46, 48, 64, 73, 134. [22] PR 64, 104, 164.

From prehensions of past occasions, a becoming actual entity gains the data, the unification of which constitutes that entity in its becoming. This concrescing occasion may not be just any unity; it is determined by its past to the degree that it must be some synthesis of just its feelings and no others. But exactly how these feelings, once they are given, will be synthesized, i.e., which of the possible unifications of the given data the occasion will become, is not and cannot be determined by past temporal occasions.[23] For how an actual entity blends into a unity its various feelings of past entities is itself a complex possibility which has not been actualized in the past. An occasion's possible modes of unification, therefore, cannot be derived from an objectification of the temporal past. It would seem, then, that the one novel eternal object which is the form of synthesis the occasion in fact achieves, as well as the many other novel possibilities which are the modes of concrescence that might be, but through gradual elimination will not be, achieved--these eternal objects are either created *ex nihilo* by the becoming temporal occasion, or they are derived from a unique actual entity where they are present by virtue of its envisagement of all possibilities. *If* we agree with Whitehead in rejecting the view that possibilities are created, then our view is decided: the possibilities for an occasion's synthesis of its given data are supplied by God--

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[23] PR 75; AI 327f. (254).

supplied in the subjective aim derived from a hybrid prehension of the primordial nature.[24] More is involved in God's actuality, however, than the mere provision of possible modes of unifying temporally given data. Eternal objects, Whitehead contends, are made available in a particular form. Consider the following: An occasion of experience may actualize any one of the possible modes of synthesis provided to it by God; if this were not so, these modes would not really be possibilities. But to posit a total indeterminism for the novel entity runs directly counter to our daily experience, in Whitehead's view. Our observations of natural order, physical "laws," and our own volitional activity suggest that real influences are at work, that there are only degrees of freedom. Put simply, as Whitehead interprets the world, occasions of experience in similar circumstances tend to actualize their data in similar ways.

How may we account for this regularity? Past temporal occasions cannot determine that the rising actual entity will conform to the dominant mode of concrescence in a particular society. God, of course, could determine the concrescence of the becoming occasion by offering it only one possible mode of synthesis, but Whitehead rejects this view as being metaphysically unnecessary and experientially inadequate.

If we deny determinism, it would seem that to account for regularity we must appeal either to chance, or to some kind of influence upon each occasion. Whitehead is far too much of a rationalist to agree that the existence of order is purely a matter of chance. We are better able to explain regularity, he believes, by appealing to some kind of influence brought to bear upon each becoming occasion, luring that occasion toward a particular form of fulfillment.[25]

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[24] See above, pp. 57f.

Now Whitehead is faced with a crucial question: What is the source of this influence upon each actual entity? Since the role of the past temporal world, as we have said, is limited to the selection of what is to be unified, not how it is to be synthesized, the only possible ground of the influence bearing upon each becoming occasion, if we assume the ontological principle, is God.

Whitehead, then, is required to try to understand how God can influence each occasion's becoming. His view is this: God lures each becoming occasion, i.e., he influences its choice of the possibilities of synthesis available to it, by providing in its initial aim a complex of relevant possibilities in a graded order of value for that occasion.

> The principle of the graduated 'intensive relevance' of eternal objects to the primary physical data of experience expresses a real fact as to the preferential adaptation of selected eternal objects to novel occasions originating from an assigned environment.
>
> This principle expresses the prehension by every crea-

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[25] Primarily because it is an influence or a lure, not a determination, mutation, irregularity and deviation can readily be allowed for.

> ture of the graduated order of appetitions constituting the primordial nature of God.[26]

Whitehead contends that God not only envisions possibilities; he also evaluates them. Since it is the primordial nature of God from which the subjective aim of each occasion is derived, it must be in the primordial nature that this valuation is placed. The primordial nature, we must conclude, is not only a togetherness; it is also a gradation of eternal objects.

It is to this latter aspect of God's conceptual envisagement that Whitehead refers when he speaks of the primordial nature as the "unconditioned conceptual valuation of the entire multiplicity of eternal objects."[27] Indeed, most often when Whitehead speaks of the primordial side of God, he makes this particular characteristic quite explicit. The primordial nature is a "valuation,"[28] a "gradation,"[29] an "ordering,"[30] a "comparison,"[31] a "differentiation,"[32] an "appetition" of eternal objects "seeking intensity,"[33] and the "ultimate, basic adjustment of the togetherness . . . in the form of aversions and adversions."[34] The primordial nature is both the togetherness of eternal objects, and the gradation or valuation of these possibilities.[35] Defined more concisely, the primordial aspect of God is the eternal, graded togetherness of the totality of eternal objects.[36]

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[26] PR 315; cf. PR 287, 373, 374, 522; SMW 251 (174).

[27] PR 46. [28] PR 46, 48, 373, 374, 377, 522, 532.

[29] PR 46, 248, 315. [30] PR 46, 373, 522. [31] PR 46.

[32] PR 392. [33] PR 160. [34] PR 48.

[35] Although Whitehead does not maintain the distinction

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with complete consistency, the primordial nature should be thought of as the "valuation" in abstraction from God's unchanging act of valuing, the "gradation" in abstraction from God's primordial grading, etc. The term refers to the relatedness of eternal objects in God's envisagement, not to God's envisaging and valuing activity. To include the latter in the primordial nature of God would require a consideration of God as an actual entity, and would tend to dissolve the theoretical division which Whitehead is making. But while this distinction is important, it must not be misunderstood. God's activity of valuing possibilities is _not_ prior to the valuation or graded relatedness of eternal objects. Or, in language to be clarified later, God as an actual entity is not prior to God's primordial nature. Indeed, each requires the other in order to be understood, and all of the aspects of God, in Whitehead's view, are "primordial" in the sense of having no temporal beginning. "Primordial" as applied to the primordial nature specifically indicates that aspect of God which is unchanging and unaffected by temporal activity.

[36] Professor Mays rightly observes that the primordial nature of God is purely abstract and "empty of all experiential content," yet he wrongly concludes that it is only "abstract logical patterns." (Mays, pp. 55f.) He writes: "Whitehead thinks the 'Primordial Nature of God' to be the _ordering entity in nature_." (_Ibid_., p. 55.) This is absolutely correct. But then Mays continues: "However, he tells us elsewhere precisely what he means by the _order of nature_ in terms free from any theological construction. 'The order of nature . . . . exhibits itself as a morphological scheme involving eternal objects of the objective species'. . . ." (_Ibid_., p. 56.) Hence, Mays concludes: "There is little doubt that the 'morphological scheme involving eternal objects of the objective species' _is_ the same concept as the 'Primordial Nature of God.'" (_Ibid_.; all underlining is mine in this footnote.)

Far from there being "little doubt," I find little likelihood that this equation is correct. To apply a definition of the _order of nature_ to the totality of the _ordering entity of nature_, from which the order of nature presumably results, seems strained enough. But Whitehead's own words make the equation quite impossible. The order of nature, as Mays correctly observes, involves only eternal objects of the objective species. Yet Whitehead writes again and again that the primordial nature involves _all_ eternal objects. (PR 46, 47, 48, 70, 134, 248, 374, 521, 523; cf. also PR 73, 524, 530.) The primordial nature, then, cannot be simply a network of logical relations.

As the togetherness of possibility in God establishes its ontological status and its relevance to actuality, so the gradation of possibility establishes possibility's influence. In being objectified, the primordial nature "expresses" a preference that some eternal objects should be actualized rather than others. As a lure or persuasive force, the primordial nature is the source of developing intensity,[37] progress,[38] the metaphysical categories,[39] metaphysical stability,[40] physical "law,"[41] the urge toward the future,[42] and the creative order.[43]

In spite of the large number of statements by Whitehead which seem to substantiate it, this interpretation of Whitehead's view of the primordial nature is, in part at least, by no means unchallenged. Professor William Christian denies that, for Whitehead, the gradation of possibilities is eternal. Christian writes: "In the primordial nature of God, taken in abstraction from acts of becoming,[44] . . . eternal objects have togetherness, but not gradations of importance."[45] The togetherness of eternal objects is eternal, according to Christian's interpretation, but the valuation is always changing, "relative to a particular instance of becoming."[46]

The effect of Professor Christian's position, I believe, is to transpose the valuation of possibility from the primordial nature of God to God considered as a total actual entity, since valuation or gradation must be dependent upon the divine actual entity's prehension of each actual occasion as it come to be. Indeed, this transposition is systematically unavoidable, for the primordial nature is unchanging[47] and unconditioned,[48] while the valuation of eternal objects as Christian understands it is relative to, and thus conditioned by, each becoming occasion of experience. This interpretation of Whitehead runs directly counter to Whitehead's explicit statement that the valuation, gradation, adjustment, etc., of eternal objects is the primordial aspect of God.[49] But I do not believe the problem is simply to determine the aspect of God in which Whitehead places the valuation of possibility, although this issue is directly related to the crucial one. The significant issue is whether that valuation or gradation is changing, as Christian suggests.

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[37] PR 104, 160, 161. [38] PR 377. [39] PR 522. [40] PR 64.

[41] PR 434. [42] PR 47. [43] PR 48, 146, 165, 373.

[44] This, of course, is the only way the primordial nature itself can be considered. See PR 50, 522.

[45] Christian, p. 275. [46] *Ibid*.

Professor Christian is not unaware that Whitehead makes statements which appear to contradict his interpretation of the primordial nature. Christian, nevertheless, feels compelled to hold to his understanding because only it, he believes, can do full justice to other important passages in Process and Reality, passages like the following:

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[47] PR 523, 524, 529.

[48] PR 46, 522, 524.

[49] PR 46, 48, 104, 160, 315, 522, 523; cf. also PR 47, 373, 532.

> It [the primordial nature] has within it no components which are standards of comparison.[50]
>
> He, in his primordial nature, is unmoved by love for this particular, or that particular; for in his foundational process of creativity there are no preconstituted particulars. . . . He cares not whether an immediate occasion be old or new, so far as concerns derivations from its ancestry. His aim for it is depth of satisfaction as an intermediate step towards the fulfillment of his own being. His tenderness is directed towards each actual occasion, as it arises.[51]

The first quotation seems to mean that there could be no valuation or gradation in the primordial nature because the primordial nature possesses no criteria within itself by which to make such valuations. But, this interpretation is not correct, I believe, for the standard being discussed in the passage is not the criterion of the gradation of eternal objects; it is the criterion of intensity.

The context of the statement is a discussion in which Whitehead says that the measure of the contribution which each actual occasion makes to the world is in proportion to that entity's subjective intensity. God's primordial nature, he adds, is the absolute standard of such intensity. Then follows the statement quoted above.

The clue to the meaning of the statement is the meaning of subjective intensity. Intensity has to do with breadth of unity; intensity increases with any growth in the content which is unified. God's primordial nature is the "absolute standard of . . . intensity" because in it all possibilities are unified--"God is primordially one. . . ."[52] Precisely because it is undivided, the ultimate standard of intensity is not some division or component of the primordial nature, but the primordial nature of God as a whole.

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[50] PR 75; cf. Christian, p. 273.

[51] PR 160f.; Christian does not refer to this passage in his discussion of the issue concerning us.

The second quotation from Whitehead seems flatly to state that God, in his primordial character, has no preferences or values. From this it would follow that to ascribe the valuation or gradation of eternal objects to the primordial nature is quite impossible.

It is important to notice, however, that God's lack of preference is for "particulars," which in this discussion refers to actual entities. God's primordial nature, on the other hand, is a valuation of eternal objects; it is completely abstracted from any particular actual occasion. The function of the primordial nature is not to produce this actual entity rather than that, but to lure any given occasion toward the highest fulfillment possible for it. "His tenderness is directed toward each occasion as it arises." For that occasion, Whitehead continues, "God's purpose in the creative advance is the evocation of intensities." This can mean nothing else than that, unlike its relationship to actual occasions, the primordial nature is a valuation or gradation of some possibilities more highly than others, namely those which will bring the occasion to the highest degree of intensity.[53]

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[52] PR 529.

Neither of these two passages, I have claimed denies that valuation or gradation rests in God's primordial nature because, in view of the context of the statements, neither is to the point. One refers to the relation of the primordial nature to subjective intensity, the other to actuality.

There are, however, other passages which Professor Christian cites which are very much on the subject, and which cannot be ignored. Whitehead, for example, is firm in rejecting the view that there is a single necessary order for all eternal objects. He writes:

> There is not, however, one entity which is merely the class of all eternal objects. For if we conceive any class of eternal objects, there are additional eternal objects which presuppose that class but do not belong to it.[54]
>
> There is not just one ideal 'order' which all actual entities should attain or fail to attain.[55]

Whitehead states, moreover, that God's valuation is an ordering of possibilities relative to each unique occasion of experience:

> In each case there is an ideal peculiar to each particular actual entity, and arising from the dominant components in

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[53] To suggest that in different actual situations, different possibilities in a given combination of possibles would elicit a higher degree of intensity, is to forget that each possible combination of possibilities can be actualized in only one actual situation. For to alter the possible spatio-temporal region in a complex eternal object is to produce a different eternal object. (See SMW pp. 247f. (172).)

[54] PR 73; cf. Christian, p. 272.

[55] PR 128; cf. Christian, pp. 271, 274.

its phase of 'giveness.'[56]

> These subjective forms are valuations determining the relative relevance of eternal objects for each occasion of actuality.[57]

Professor Christian, it cannot be denied, has Whitehead's support in contending (a) that there is no single order of eternal objects,[58] and (b) that the eternal objects in God's envisagement are always ordered with some manner of reference to individual occasions.[59] Since each actual occasion is unique, it would certainly seem, at first glance, that God's ordering of the possibilities relevant to any particular occasion must *await* the definition of the real potentialities available to that specific occasion. Hence, God cannot *primordially* order the eternal objects relevant to each occasion. From this it follows that "in the primordial nature . . . , eternal objects have togetherness but not gradations of importance."[60] This, I believe, is a fair representation of Professor Christian's line of reasoning.

Points (a) and (b) must be fully accepted. The other points, in my opinion, do not necessarily follow. In Whitehead's view, the primordial nature is the envisagement of all possibilities. This must mean that in the primordial nature are envisioned _all_ _possible_ _combinations_ of possibilities. Hence, it is inconceivable that a becoming temporal occasion could actualize a complex of possibilities, i.e., a complex eternal object, which is not _eternally_ _envisioned_. God cannot know which possible combination of possibilities will be actualized; nevertheless, any that are actualized will have been envisioned in God's primordial nature eternally.

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[56] PR 128; cf. Christian, pp. 271, 274.

[57] PR 522; cf. also PR 134.

[58] Christian, p. 272.

[59] *Ibid.*, p. 275.

[60] *Ibid*. Professor Christian does use the term "order" in connection with the primordial nature, but he means by it nothing more than mere "togetherness." (See *Ibid*., p. 274.) It does not have the connotation of "valuation" or "gradation."

Because the primordial envisagement is both unlimited and eternal, each possibility and each possible combination of possibilities is eternally present to God; it is eternally there to be valued in relation to other primordially present possibilities. Viewed in this manner, there seems to be no systematic reason why God cannot primordially _value_ each eternal object in every possible group (in relation to other possibilities in that group), as well as _envision_ them. No reference to what in fact is actualized is necessary; God only needs to know what may become actual. As a consequence, for Whitehead it is metaphysically possible that each possible combination of possibilities which becomes relevant to a particular becoming temporal occasion could have been primordially envisioned _and_ graded, adjusted or valued. For this reason I believe those statements by Whitehead which suggest that there is no final order, or that each ordering is relevant to a particular act of temporal becoming, are entirely consistent with his characterization of the primordial nature as involving both togetherness and an unchanging gradation.

Much in Whitehead's doctrine of God is metaphysically required. Whitehead's doctrine of process, it has been shown, requires him to posit the existence of a non-temporal actual entity embracing both potentiality and actuality[61] and providing each actual occasion with its possible modes of synthesis.[62] We have contended that the doctrine of the primordial, unchanging gradation of possibilities is entirely consistent with the remainder of Whitehead's system. But whether that doctrine is also one required by the fundamentals of Whitehead's philosophy of process has not yet been determined.

The doctrine of the primordial gradation hinges upon two other concepts. One, which we have discussed, is the idea of God's eternal and unlimited envisagement. For the doctrine of the primordial *gradation* presupposes (and is presupposed by) God's grading of the eternal objects, and God could unchangingly value or grade these possibilities, assuming that he were so motivated, only if they were all eternally present to him. But that God should in fact adopt a stable attitude toward these possibilities depends upon his having a constant character, so that he would be consistent in his appreciation of each possibility in relation to others. The second concept, therefore, upon which the doctrine of the primordial valuation depends is that of God's unchanging character, the constancy of his essential nature.

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[61] See above, pp. 69-71.

[62] See above, pp. 74-76.

In spite of his heavy emphsis upon change and process, even in God himself, there can be no doubt that Whitehead does affirm the immutability of God's essential character.[63] As is well-known, those theologies which make will primary in the divine nature are condemned by Whitehead for turning God into a tyrant.[64] Whitehead rejects these views because they, in his judgment, picture God as acting "from whims or passionate compulsions, not from a rational purpose arising from a rational nature."[65]

Given these two concepts, the doctrine of God's primordial valuation seems necessarily to follow. For if God is constant in character and comprehensive in his envisagement of potentiality, his "attitude" toward any possibility, in its relationships to all combinations of other possibilities, would surely be identical at all times. But whether the idea of the primordial valuation is really a necessary element of Whitehead's position depends upon the metaphysical necessity of the two doctrines from which it is derived. The first doctrine, i.e., the eternal envisagement of all possibilities in an actual entity, is drawn unavoidably from Whitehead's ontological principle.

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[63] See, eg., RM 94-99 (91-96).

[64] See "Immortality" in Paul A. Schilpp, ed., _The Philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead_ (New York: Tudor Publishing Co., 1951), p. 647. ("Immortality" is cited hereafter as IMM.) Cf. also RM 55 (54f.); MT 68.

[65] Christian, p. 389.

This doctrine, then, is metaphysically necessary to Whitehead's view of process. But the second doctrine, i.e., the constant character of God, does not have such a status; it is not required by Whitehead's philosophy of the temporal process, nor is it implied by the categorical scheme. Instead, it arises from an intuition of an aesthetic order (of which the moral and natural orders are aspects) upon which the passing temporal world depends for its actuality[66]--an intuition upon which Whitehead thinks the great religions are based.[67]

It is at least conceivable, I should think, that one might hold to Whitehead's view of the basic mechanics of temporal process (such as prehension, concrescence, etc.) as elaborated in the categorical scheme, and yet insist that whatever order does exist is simply irrational, a matter of chance not at all requiring the existence of an entity which orders possibility. Or, one might even affirm a series of momentary gradations of possibility, each gradation being relevant to a particular occasion, without also accepting the view of a pervasive order[68] subscribed to by Whitehead and accounted for by him with his doctrine of the eternal and unchanging gradation of possibilities in God's primordial nature.

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[66] RM 104f. (100f.). Note that the argument for Whitehead's idea of God, in the first part of this chapter, makes an important shift at this very point. Prior to the paragraph beginning "More is involved. . . ." on page 73, Whitehead's ideas concerning God were shown to follow from his categorical postulates concerning the mechanics of process. The concept reached after that point, i.e., the unchanging gradation of possibilities in God's primordial nature, is the conclusion of an argument from the experience of order and the assumption that order must have a rational explanation; it is not a conclusion derived from the Whiteheadian categorical scheme.

To be sure, the categorical scheme is also an interpretation based upon experience, by Whitehead's own admission. But once this postulative level is reached, the question is what elements of Whitehead's doctrine of God follow from it necessarily, and what elements are allowed by the categorical scheme, but not required by it. The doctrine of the unchanging valuation of eternal objects in the primordial nature, I am arguing, falls into the latter class. Later I shall contend that an element of Whitehead's doctrine of the consequent nature of God falls into the same class of possible, but non-necessary doctrines. (See below, pp.105-7.)

[67] See RM 119f. (115).

In so far, then, as Whitehead's confidence in the constancy of God's character is based upon religious intuition and is not strictly implied by his metaphysical principles, the derivative doctrine of the primordiality of God's *valuation* is necessary only in the peculiar sense of being demanded by "somewhat exceptional elements in our conscious experience."[69] The non-necessity of this doctrine, metaphysically speaking, is expressed well in a discussion of the primordial valuation as a limitation or harmonization found in *Science and the Modern World*.

> God is the ultimate limitation. . . . For no reason can be given for just that limitation which it stands in his nature to impose. . . . We have come to the limit of rationality. For there is a categorical limitation which does not spring from any metaphysical reason. . . . The general principle

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[68] Whitehead does not take the position that there is one final and all-inclusive order of actuality, as W. E. Hocking seems to believe he does. See Hocking, *Science and the Idea of God* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944), pp. 108-09. Cf. Whitehead's view, eg., PR 128 and 169.

[69] PR 521.

> of empiricism depends upon the doctrine that there is a principle of concretion which is not discoverable by abstract reason. What further can be known about God must be sought in the region of particular experiences, and therefore rests on an empirical basis. In respect to the interpretation of these experiences, mankind have differed profoundly. He has been named respectively, Jehovah, Allah, Brahma, Father in Heaven, Order of Heaven, First Cause, Supreme Being, Chance.[70]

Now I am suggesting that the metaphysical status of the doctrine of God's primordial valuation is such that God might be left "nameless" without violating the necessary core of the Whiteheadian doctrine of process--that in fact one may be both Whiteheadian and, in a sense, agnostic. Whitehead, I believe, often recognizes this to be true.[71] In sum, Whitehead maintains the view that the gradation of eternal objects in God's primordial vision is unchanging even though he realizes that such a view is not required by his categorical principles of process. Whitehead's basis for such an affirmation is admittedly a rather special type of experience, or at least a special interpretation of experience.

To this point we have defended the view that, according to Whitehead, the primordial nature of God is the eternal, graded togetherness of the totality of eternal objects. We would be wrong, however, to suppose that this exhausts the concept of God of the later Whitehead. For the primordial nature,

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[70] SMW 257 (179).

[71] I interpret the above-quoted passage to be such a recognition. Cf., however, such statements to the contrary as are found in RM 94 (91f.), 104f. (101), 119f. (115).

Whitehead writes in Process and Reality, is purely abstract and deficient in actuality.[72] It is a bare principle; in large measure it is the "principle of concretion" of some of Whitehead's earlier writings.[73]

This kind of language casts the primordial nature, considered in abstraction from God as an actual entity,[74] into a light somewhat different than we are likely to assume at first. In this kind of consideration, the terms "envisagement" and "valuation" are not at all intended by Whitehead to suggest conscious consideration.[75] In abstraction, to say that eternal objects are primordially envisioned means only that possibilities are eternal constituents of reality, presupposed by,[76] and hence relevant to every event of temporal actuality. Likewise, to say that eternal objects are primordially valued or graded means simply that there is a "preferential adaptation of selected eternal objects to novel occasions"[77]--that the realization of possibilities has a "bent" toward certain patterns of order.[78]

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[72] PR 50, 521f., 522, 524, 532. [73] See PR 374, 523.

[74] It is very important to remember that, in the later Whitehead, the primordial nature is an abstraction; it is purely a "distinction of reason." We might note that if one were to ignore the ontological principle, as Whitehead seems to have done earlier, he might well limit his discussion of God to the characterization of the primordial nature which follows. The mature Whitehead does not do this. But when he does speak systematically of the primordial nature, and of that alone, the remainder of the paragraph, I believe, is by no means an inaccurate statement of what Whitehead has in mind.

[75] See PR 49f., 522. [76] PR 523.

[77] PR 315. Cf. also SMW 251 (174): "Eternal objects inform actual occasions with hierarchic patterns. . . ."

Whitehead claims that at least some of the functions of God in the universe could be recognized quite apart from the incidence of religion emotion.[79] The role of the abstract "efficient fact"[80] which is the source of order may be one of those divine functions, for some people at least. But this does not mean that the primordial nature may never be the basis of religious emotion. To say, as Whitehead does, that "religious feeling is not an essential element in the concept of God's [primordial] function"[81] is not to say that it is not a possible element in that concept, Moreover, since he elsewhere claims that the foundation of religion is the awareness of order,[82] Whitehead must personally feel that the primordial nature, which is the ground of order in his cosmology,[83] _is_ "religiously available," though it obviously may not exhaust the basis of religious emotion.[84]

There is much else that Whitehead affirms, metaphysically and religiously, about God's nature and function. An ayalysis of what remains in Whitehead's theology leads us beyond the primordial nature to what Whitehead calls the consequent nature of God.

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[78] The assumption of an inherent inclination toward patterns of order is the metaphysical basis, I think, for a Whiteheadian phrase such as "a general character inherent in the nature of things." (RM 67 (65).) It is also the foundation of a statement like the following: "there is a large concensus . . . in favour of the concept of a rightness in things, partially conformed to and partially disregarded." (RM 66 (65).)

[79] PR 315f. [80] PR 48; cf. also PR 315, 374, 530.

[81] PR 315f. [82] See PR 47 and RM 119f. (115). [83] PR 527.

[84] This view is in direct contrast to the position of Stephen Ely, who understands Whitehead's idea of God almost exclusively in terms of the primordial nature, and who denies to

The Consequent Nature of God

In the last section we said that, in part, Whitehead's doctrine of the primordial nature of God is required by certain of his metaphysical principles, and that the remainder of his doctrine is entirely consistent with, though not required by, his basic philosophy of process. Although it is sometimes ignored by his interpreters, Whitehead's doctrine of God's consequent nature, in part, is no less metaphysically necessary to his system. Consideration of two of Whitehead's most important principles conjointly makes this quite clear. The first is the ontological principle; the second, the principle of relativity.

Nothing, Whitehead insists, "can float into the actual world out of non-entity. . . ." "Everything must be somewhere; and . . . 'somewhere' means 'some actual entity.'"[85] If we accept this, the ontological principle, we will agree that unrealized possibility, too, because it is an element of reality, must be an aspect of some actual entity--an actual entity which is at least partially non-temporal itself since the eternal

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this aspect of God's being any "religious availability" whatsoever. See Stephen Ely, The Religious Availability of Whitehead's God (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1942).

[85] PR 73.

objects it holds in its conceptual vision are non-temporal. Whitehead calls this actual entity "God."[86]

According to the principle of relativity, to be an actual entity is to influence and to be influenced by other occasions of experience. It is the very nature of an actual entity, we are told, "to be present in every other actual entity."[87] On this basis we must attribute to the actual entity, God, another aspect besides his primordial one, an aspect which is consequent upon God's relationship to the world of temporality.[88] He is only being consistent with his understanding of what it means to be actual, therefore, when Whitehead affirms that God, like all other actual entities, is partly consequent.[89]

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[86] PR 47: "It is here termed 'God'; because the contemplation of our natures, as enjoying real feelings derived from the timeless source of all order, acquires that 'subjective form' of refreshment and companionship at which religions aim."

[87] PR 79; cf. PR 33, 43, 76, 224, 252, 532.

[88] The contrast between the two natures of God involves much more than the fact that one is primordial and the other consequent. The primordial aspect of God is changeless and complete; the consequent nature is evolving (PR 19) and incomplete (PR 524). The former is eternal; the latter is everlasting (PR 524, 527). The primordial side of God is free or unconditioned; the consequent side is determined by the character of God's subjective aim toward richness of intensity, an aim derived finally from the primordial nature (PR 523, 524). Moreover, the primordial nature is composed of eternal objects, or possibilities realized and unrealized, but the consequent nature consists of a multiplicity of occasions of actuality (PR 530, 531).

[89] See, eg., PR 532. It is apparent that while all actual entities are 'consequent' (in the sense of being influenced by other occasions), only God is 'primordial' in the sense in which Whitehead uses the term.

The idea of God's consequent nature is expressed in several ways by Whitehead. The consequent nature of God, he says, is the "reception into God's nature" of "each actuality in the temporal world."[90] It is the "reaction of the temporal world on the nature of God."[91] It is the "representation in the divine nature" of the "organic actualities of the world"[92] It is,[93] or is the result of,[94] the "physical prehension by God of the actualities of the evolving universe."[95] Finally, the consequent nature of God is the "objectification"[96] or "realization of the actual world in the unity of his nature."[97]

In all of these statements, Whitehead is simply stating what he must in order not to violate those principles which he has taken to be expressive of the fundamental character of reality, the ontological and relativity principles. He is saying that God is an actual entity, and that this actual entity, like all others, prehends each past occasion of experience (at least to the extent of objectifying it by one of the eternal objects it exemplifies). As we have seen, this part of Whitehead's view of the consequent nature seems logically unavoidable, given Whitehead's metaphysical principles.

Yet even the most casual glance at sections of Process and Reality reveals that considerably more is involved in the concept of the consequent nature of God than we have discussed thus far. For Whitehead goes on to claim that God's prehension of each actual occasion effects a "transmutation" of that occasion, a transmutation which is both objective and subjective. The objective side of the transmutation of temporal occasions in God is especially clear in the following passages:

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[90] PR 531; cf. PR 530.

[91] PR 19; cf. PR 47.

[92] PR 18f.

[93] PR 46.

[94] PR 134.

[95] PR 134; cf. PR 524.

[96] PR 523.

[97] PR 524.

> The consequent nature of God . . . is the realization of the actual world . . . through the transformation of his wisdom.[98]

> The perfection of God's subjective aim, derived from the completeness of his primordial nature, issues into the character of his consequent nature. In it there is no loss, no obstruction. . . .
>
> The wisdom of the subjective aim prehends every actuality for what it can be in such a perfected system--its sufferings, its sorrows, its failures, its triumphs, its immediacies of joy--woven by rightness of feeling into the harmony of the universal feeling, which is . . . never perishing. The revolts of destructive evil, purely self-regarding, are dismissed into their triviality of merely individual facts; and yet the good they did achieve in individual joy, in individual sorrow, in the introduction of needed contrast, is yet saved by its relation to the completed whole. The image--and it is but an image--the image under which this operative growth of God's nature is best conceived, is that of a tender care that nothing be lost.
>
> The consequent nature of God is his judgment on the world. He saves the world as it passes into the immediacy of his own life. It is the judgment of a tenderness which loses nothing that can be saved. It is also the judgment of a wisdom which uses what in the temporal world is mere wreckage.[99]

> The problems of the fluency of God and of the everlastingness of passing experience are solved by the same factor in the universe. This factor is the temporal world perfected

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[98] PR 524. All underlining is mine in this and the following six quotations. The phrases so indicated are particularly germane to the discussion below.

[99] PR 524f.

> *by its reception and its reformation*. . . . In this way . . . the temporal occasions are completed by their everlasting union with *their transformed selves, purged into conformation with the eternal order* which is the final absolute 'wisdom.'[100]

> [In the consequent nature] the complete adjustment of the immediacy of joy and suffering reaches the final end of creation. This end is the existence in the *perfect unity of adjustment as means*, and in the perfect multiplicity of the attainment of individual types of self-existence.[101]

> Each actuality in the temporal world has its reception in God's nature. The corresponding element in God's nature is not temporal actuality, but is the transmutation of that temporal actuality into *living, ever-present* fact. An enduring personality in the temporal world is a route of occasions in which the successors with some peculiar completeness sum up their predecessors. The correlate fact in God's nature is an even more complete unity of life in a chain of elements for which succession *does not mean the loss of immediate unison*.[102]

> [In the consequent nature] the many are one everlastingly, *without the qualification of any loss either of individual identity or of completeness of unity*.[103]

> [The third of the four phases "in which the universe accompolishes its actuality"] is the phase of *perfected actuality*, in which the many are one everlastingly. . . .[104]

These passages, I believe, suggest that what has been called the objective aspect of the transmutation of each actual occasion in the consequent nature of God involves two things. One may be called "preservation"; the other, "transformation."

Whitehead maintains that each temporal occasion is preserved as a "living, ever-present fact."[105] Each actual entity is "remembered" by God as an item of factuality which can never be altered or erased. But, of course, in a minimal sense this kind of preservation is also characteristic of purely temporal passage. As the fifth and sixth passages quoted above indicate, however, Whitehead is asserting a good deal more than this about the passage from an occasion's temporal existence to its objectively immortal existence in God. While in temporal succession an actual entity prehends a predecessor by objectifying one of the (simple or complex) eternal objects it exemplifies,[106] "there is no reason, of any ultimate generality, why this should be the whole story."[107] God prehends each occasion's full "individual identity," its "completeness of unity."[108] In the succession from becoming to objective immortality *in God*, there is no "loss of [the] immediate unison" of the feeling which each actual occasion achieves in its satisfaction, for the entire complex of positive and negative feelings constituent of each temporal synthesis is preserved fully in the consequent nature of God.[109]

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[100] PR 527.

[101] PR 530f.

[102] PR 531.

[103] PR 532.

[104] PR 532.

[105] PR 531.

Although Whitehead is clear that every feeling in each temporal satisfaction is preserved in its fulness, he is less clear than one might wish on whether he believes that each occasion's subjective immediacy is also preserved. Professor William Christian has offered a most balanced discussion of this issue.[110] He notes the three following passages which seem to allow an affirmative answer:

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[106] See PR 517.

[107] PR 517.

[108] PR 532.

[109] See PR 517, 524. Cf. also Professor Christian's statement: God "conforms to every feeling, and he conforms perfectly to each feeling." (Christian, p. 351.)

> There is a unison of becoming among things in the present. Why should there not be novelty without loss of this direct unison of immediacy among things?[111]
>
> In it /the consequent nature of God/ there is no loss, no obstruction. The world is felt in a unison of immediacy. The property of combining creative advance with the retension of mutual immediacy is what in the previous section is meant by the term 'everlasting.'[112]
>
> Thus the consequent nature of God is composed of a multiplicity of elements with individual self-realization.[113]

Questioning the position that these passages suggest the preservation of subjective immediacy, Christian writes:

> Several comments on these passages are in order. (a) The "unison of immediacy" referred to in the first two passages is God's own immediacy, as the second passage makes clear. . . . (c) In the third passage it might have been better to say the consequent nature of God "unifies" a multiplicity of elements. These elements, actual occasions, do have individual self-realization in their own immediate experiences. But God's own immediate experience is not a multiplicity but a unity, in which the multiplicity of occasions is objectified. (d) The suggestion that actual occasions retain their immediacy when objectified in God, which these passages might permit, is not consistent with some fundamental principles or with the plain meanings of other texts.[114]

The "other texts" are these:

> /Actual occasions/ obtain adequate representation in the divine nature. Such representations compose the 'consequent nature' of God.[115]

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[110] Christian, pp. 340-42.

[111] PR 517.

[112] PR 525.

[113] PR 531.

[114] Christian, p. 341.

[115] PR 18f. (Christian's underlining); see Christian, p. 341.

> [God's physical experience is] *initially* derived from the temporal world.[116]

> [The nature of God] receives into its unity the scattered effectiveness of realized activities, *transformed* by the supremacy of its own ideals.[117]

> Each actuality in the temporal world has its reception into God's nature. The corresponding element in God's nature is not *temporal actuality*, but is the *transmutation of that* temporal actuality into a living, ever-present fact. An enduring personality in the temporal world is a route of occasions in which the successors with some peculiar completeness sum up their predecessors. The *correlate fact in God's nature* is an even more complete unity of life in a chain of elements for which succession does not mean loss of immediate unison. This element in God's nature inherits from the *temporal counterpart according to the same principle* as in the temporal world the future inherits from the past. Thus in the sense in which the present occasion is the person *new*, and yet with his own past, so the counterpart in God is that person in God.[118]

Then Professor Christian concludes:

> It appears from these passages that when actual occasions are prehended into the consequent nature of God they do not retain their own immediacies. They obtain "adequate representation" in God's experience. They are "transmuted." The "living, ever-present fact," the "even more complete unity of life," is not the collective immediacies of the individual actual occasions. It is the everlasting subjectively immediate experience of God. The "correlate fact" in God's nature "inherits from the temporal counterpart according to the same principle as in the temporal world the future inherits from the past." This means . . . that actual occasions do not persist into God's experience with their own subjective immediacy. They are objectively immortal in God's own subjectively immediate experience.[119]

While Professor Christian does not claim to be conclusive, the question might be even more open than he is willing to allow. Regarding his comments on the three passages he lists initially, it is by no means clear that the "'unison of immediacy' referred to in the first two passages is God's own immediacy" and not that of objectively immortal occasions. Furthermore, Whitehead's statement that temporal process always involves loss is meant to be an empirical observation, and I know of no metaphysical principle in Whitehead's system which drives us to that conclusion. Finally, concerning the "plain meaning of other texts," only the fourth of those mentioned seems to me to offer evidence against the preservation of subjective immediacy in God. Certainly the emphatic distinction between "temporal actuality" and "the transmutation of that temporal actuality" could be understood to refer to a difference traceable to the disappearance of subjective immediacy. Such a distinction, however, must remain inconclusive evidence, for it just as likely refers to the contrast between an occasion as its temporal self and as its perfected self, to be discussed below.

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[116] PR 524 (Christian's underlining); see Christian, p. 341.

[117] IMM 697-98 (Christian's underlining); see Christian, p. 341.

[118] PR 531-32 (underlining mine).

[119] Christian, p. 342. Also see pp. 342-44 for additional discussion.

The more convincing evidence for Professor Christian's interpretation, I believe, is the analogy, in the same passage, between the person now and his past, and the "correlate fact in God" and the past "temporal counterpart" from which it stems. A person's past moments of experience certainly lack the immediacy of the present moment. If Whitehead means to equate the past temporal occasion with one's personal past on the point of subjective immediacy, then Christian's interpretation of

Whitehead on this issue is correct.

The difficulty, however, is that Whitehead may instead be comparing the essential similarity of the passage from occasion to occasion and that from occasion to God, as the preceding sentence suggests.[120] If so, it is surely significant that in the next sentence preceding Whitehead notes that, as compared with purely temporal succession, the passage from occasion to God is in an important sense different!--it is "an even more complete unity of life . . . for which succession does not mean loss of immediate unision." It is by no means indisputable that the phrase "does not [necessarily?] mean loss of immediate unison" is not a suggestion of the retention of subjective immediacy (or at least that possibility, if "necessarily" is correctly read into the sentence).

It is quite conceivable that the difficulty in reaching a persuasive interpretation of Whitehead, pro or con, on this question results from the fact that Whitehead had no final opinion on the matter and did not think he could reach one. It is possible that he considered both the preservation and the non-preservation of subjective immediacy to be metaphysical possibilities, and that the only means of deciding the question was empirical. As my only evidence for interpreting Whitehead in this manner I offer a passage from Whitehead on immortality, which is part and parcel of the same issue. "The doctrine here developed," writes Whitehead, ". . . is entirely neutral on the question of immortality. . . . There is no reason why such a question should not be decided on more special evidence, religious or otherwise, provided that it is trustworthy."[121]

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[120] Also note: "according to the same principle."

In addition to preservation, transmutation on its objective side includes what we shall call "transformation." Of the seven passages quoted from Whitehead on pages 96 and 97, the first four and the last present this element of Whitehead's position most plainly. Here Whitehead asserts that through each occasion's objectification in God, the value achieved in that occasion is integrated into the growing whole of value to which each actual occasion in objective immortality contributes. In a manner presumably analogous to the unification of the past by each becoming occasion, God synthesizes the totality of given data in the most perfect form of experiential unification possible. In temporal succession, we recall, the past determines what is to be synthesized, but the choice of which of the possible modes of synthesis is to be taken resides with the present moment of experience. So it is with God. God is determined in the sense that he must prehend this actual world, but he is free to integrate it experientially in any manner possible.[122]

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[121] RM 110f. (107).

[122] God is free from external determination in his decision as to how the given shall be felt. He is, however, determined even in this decision in the sense that the outcome is an inevitable expression of his primordial vision. See PR 523f.

The experiential unification which is the consequent nature of God, according to the doctrine of transformation, represents the maximum possible intensity of aesthetic feeling. Therefore, even that which is "mere wreckage" in the temporal world is saved to the degree that it enriches the quality of God's feeling by contributing to the patterned contrast present in the consequent nature.[123]

Transmutation, both as preservation and as transformation, is objective in character. It is effected by God's own enjoyment irrespective of any "awareness" of that enjoyment on the part of that which is transmuted. Whitehead, however, suggests an additional and subjective side of transmutation. He writes: "The sense of worth beyond itself is immediately enjoyed as an overpowering element in the individual self-attainment. It is in this way that the immediacy of sorrow and pain is transformed into an element of triumph."[124]

Whitehead seems to be arguing that at least some actual occasions are capable of sensing that they shall make a contribution beyond the momentary span of their existence. In this way any immediate experience of defeat is subjectively transmuted into triumph. Whether what is supposedly sensed is the occasion's contribution to the consequent nature of God, to the future temporal world, or to both, is left unsaid. The last option seems to be most consonant with Whitehead's spirit. And whether this sense of worth is thought to be a characteristic of only some occasions, of all equally, or of all to varying degrees, is also left unspecified. Again I would judge the last position to be Whitehead's. But without resorting to conjecture of any sort, we may conclude that Whitehead frankly affirms a subjective kind of transmutation--a salvation by hope--effected by an occasion's awareness of its own potential contribution to the harmony of God's perfect vision of the whole of actuality.

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[123] Over and above this limited value, evil or pure self-regard remains the negative factor that it is. It is not illusory or passing. Indeed, though rendered trivial when regarded in the context of the rich fund of values achieved, evil remains as everlasting as the unity of value itself. See PR 517.

[124] PR 531.

We turn finally to the question of the basis of this aspect of Whitehead's doctrine of the consequent nature of God. What is there in Whitehead's fundamental metaphysical assumptions which requires him to ascribe this redemptive function to the consequent nature? What makes the doctrine of transmutation metaphysically necessary to Whitehead's system? The answer, I believe, is nothing. These ideas are not required by metaphysical principles derived from the general character of experience. Their basis, instead, is a special type of experience called religious intuition.

> . . . objective immortality within the temporal world does not solve the problem set by the penetration of the finer religious intuition. 'Everlastingness' has been lost; and 'everlastingness' is the content of that vision upon which the finer religions are built--the 'many' absorbed everlastingly in the final unity. The problems of the fluency of God and of the everlastingness of passing experience are solved by the same factor in the universe. This factor is the temporal world perfected by its reception and its re-

> formation, as a fulfillment of the primordial appetition which is the basis of all order. In this way God is completed by the individual, fluent satisfactions of finite fact, and the temporal occasions are completed by their everlasting union with their transformed selves. . . .[125]

We have seen that if we accept Whitehead's ontological principle, it is necessary that we also affirm the doctrine that eternal objects are included in a partially non-temporal actual entity. Further, if we accept the principle of relativity, we shall be obliged to assert that this actual entity objectifies all past occasions in the same partial manner that every occasion prehends its past. Thus, from these two premises the doctrine of the consequent nature as simply the togetherness of temporal occasions in God's nature is a metaphysically necessary result.

Whitehead's additional statement, however, that each temporal occasion is transmuted in God's nature, is not required by his categorical presuppositions. But whether this doctrine is metaphysically necessary is not the crucial question. The important issue, in Whitehead's view, is whether that which is logically necessary "imposes the belief that it is the whole truth."[126] Whitehead believes that it does not. Much more than the necessary may well be affirmed, and the doctrine of transmutation is one such possible affirmation. It is admittedly out of concern which is religious that Whitehead embraces this particular metaphysical possibility, for he writes:

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[125] RM 527. Cf. also PR 517; RM 104f. (100f.), 119f. (115).

[126] PR 519.

> There is nothing here in the nature of proof. There is merely the confrontation of the theoretic system with a certain rendering of the facts. But the unsystematized report upon the facts is itself highly controversial, and the system is confessedly inadequate. . . . Any cogency of argument depends entirely upon elucidation of somewhat exceptional elements in our conscious experience--those elements which may roughly be classed together as religious and moral intuitions.[127]

While it would seem that we must affirm the first part of the Whiteheadian doctrine of the consequent nature if we accept his philosophical assumptions, we are likely to accept his teaching on the transmutation of the temporal world in God only if we share Whitehead's religious vision.

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[127] PR 521.

CHAPTER V

WHITEHEAD'S DOCTRINE OF GOD: II

Much of what Whitehead says about God in Process and Reality is clearly intended as a reference to either the primordial or the consequent nature. Several times, however, Whitehead refers to God as an actual entity.[1] Some may suppose this to be a mere figure of speech. But to the contrary, Whitehead's view of God cannot be understood at all unless we interpret God primarily in terms of his being an actual entity and only secondarily in terms of his aspects or natures. This may be shown in several ways.

The primacy of God as an actual entity becomes clear when we seek assumption underlying Whitehead's view of the primordial nature. This aspect of God's being, we recall, is the graded togetherness or relatedness of eternal objects; it is the hierarchical valuation of combinations of possibilities. But what values or grades the realm of possibilities? Certainly Whitehead cannot ascribe this function to the consequent nature. The togetherness of temporal occasions in God could scarcely be conceived as valuing the total sphere of possibilities, most of which are without expression in temporal occasions and virtually irrelevant to them. The correct answer to Whitehead's system can only be that God the actual entity envisions possibilities. There is an eternal graded togetherness of possibilities because the actual entity, God eternally prehends the totality of eternal objects in a preferential manner. Hence, Whitehead's doctrine of the primordial nature presupposes the concept of God as an actual entity.

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[1] PR 28, 116, 134, 135, 143, 168, 248, 374; cf. also PR 54.

Consideration of the consequent nature serves equally well to display the primacy of the idea of God as an actual entity. We saw in the last chapter that the consequent nature is the reception, realization, objectification or prehension of the temporal world by God. But what in the divine nature can be said to receive, realize, objectify or prehend? To ascribe this role to the primordial nature as it is conceived by Whitehead would be manifestly meaningless. The only intelligible answer to this question, given Whitehead's system, is the actual entity God. The consequent nature is the togetherness of objectively immortal temporal occasions in God because God the actual entity prehends the world of perishing occasions. As in the case of the primordial nature, the presupposition of Whitehead's doctrine of the consequent nature is the view that God is an actual entity.

We have seen that the move from the so-called natures of God to God the actual entity is necessary in order to insure the meaningfulness of Whitehead's doctrines of each of the two aspects of God. Such a move is also demanded by a major metaphysical assumption of Whitehead's position--the ontological principle.

The view that the primordial nature is a valuation and that the consequent nature is an objectification raises, in Whitehead's opinion, the simple question of causality. What values? What objectifies?

That such a question should be raised at all is far from universally accepted. If, for example, one is predis-posed to assert that there seems to be a tendency toward order in natural events (i.e., a "preferential adaptation" of possibility to actuality, in Whitehead's language) it is not common that he also ask why this might be so, as Whitehead does. One who is prone toward positivism generally chooses carefully to describe what he sees without bothering to posit underlying reasons or to attempt to elucidate them.

In Whitehead's judgment, such a lack of concern for reasons is at best an arbitrary methodological device which, when generalized, becomes a "self-denial of thought."[2] He writes:

> Suppose that a hundred thousand years ago our ancestors had been wise positivists. They sought for no reasons. What they had observed was sheer matter of fact. It was the development of no necessity. They would have searched for no reasons underlying facts immediately observed. Civilization would never have developed. Our varied powers of detailed observation of the world would have remained dormant. For the peculiarity of a reason is that the intellectual development of its consequences suggests consequences beyond the topics already observed. The ex-extension of observation waits upon some dim apprehension of reasonable connection. For example, the observation of insects on flowers dimly suggests some congruity between the natures of insects and of flowers, and thus leads to a

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[2] PR 8.

> wealth of observation from which whole branches of science have developed. But a consistent positivist should be content with the observed facts, namely insects visiting flowers. It is a fact of charming simplicity. There is nothing further to be said upon the matter, according to the doctrine of the positivist. At present the scientific world is suffering from a bad attack of muddle-headed positivism, which arbitrarily applies its doctrine and arbitrarily escapes from it.[3]

Thus, though Whitehead agrees with the modern positivist who rejects Plato's non-actual Forms as an answer to the question of ultimate reasons, the agreement is only momentary. While the positivist rejects all answers because he dismisses the question, Whitehead finds the question to be the foundation of rationalization, and so he follows another principle and seeks an answer different from Plato's.

Whitehead's answer to the questions, what eternally envisions possibility in a graded manner? and, what prehends temporal actual occasions in their objective immortality? is governed--indeed, as we have said, it is metaphysically necessitated--by his view that only the actual is an explanation. _If_ one agrees that reality is in some fundamental sense divisible into potentiality and actuality, and _if_ one follows Whitehead in rejecting Plato's view that potentiality can be a reason for what is actual, _then_ one should also accept the Whiteheadian principle that only that which is actual is an explanation--the ontological principle.

For Whitehead, who has defined an actual entity as that which is actual, the ontological principle implies that actual entities are the only reasons. Therefore, by the ontological principle, the answers to the questions, what orders possibility eternally? and, what objectifies occasions everlastingly? are one and the same--an actual entity. Since God is, by definition, that which produces value through the envisionment of actuality--that is, since God is that which orders possibility eternally and objectifies occasions everlastingly--there is no escaping the conclusion at which Whitehead finally arrived: God is an actual entity.

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[3] MT 203f. Cf. AI 157-64 (127-32).

Perhaps we may now see that the division of God into primordial (or mental) and consequent (or physical) aspects has the same limitation as the division of any other actual entity into mental and physical parts. It is an accurate description, but only a partial one. An actual occasion is a synthesis of feelings only a few of which are purely physical or purely mental. Many other feelings, eg., comparative feelings, propositional feelings, physical purposes, subjective forms and even intellectual feelings, may shade off toward one pure type or the other and, in fact, may be called physical or mental to indicate their predominant character. But they are, strictly speaking, impure because they represent stages in the progressive synthesis of the two original pure types of feeling. Hence, an actual occasion is more than the sum of its purely physical and mental parts. So it is with God. God is more than the sum of the primordial and consequent natures. God is an actual entity certain feelings of which are designated as primordial, others as consequent, and still others as neither because they constitute the synthesis of the mental and physical parts into a unified whole.

Because God is an actual entity, Whitehead speaks of God as an "instance of experience,"[4] and describes him in much the same language employed in the description of temporal actual entities. Professor William Christian's summary of this point needs no expansion. According to Whitehead, writes Christian:

> God is a unity of conceptual and physical experience (PR 54). He is concrescence (PR 47, 54, 134), satisfaction (PR 48, 135), and superject (PR 135, 532; MT 128). He has subjective aim (RM 100; 134-5, 522, 524) and subjective forms of feeling (PR 50, 134, 522). He exists formally, as an immediate actuality and he exists objectively for other actual entities (PR 47, 377-8).[5]

God as an Actual Entity and as Personally Ordered Society

After the foregoing discussion it seems peculiar indeed to raise the question of whether Whitehead's God ought to be thought of as an actual entity rather than as a personally ordered society of occasions. Whitehead's own often repeated statements, some assume, ought to close any debate before it begins. If the question pertains to what doctrine Whitehead believed to be most consistent with his basic principles, this assumption is probably correct. Thus the most comprehensive interpretation of Whitehead's metaphysics in print is quite safe in averring that for Whitehead "the unity of God differs in mode . . . from that of a human person . . . . He is not a society but a single actual entity."[6] One of the earlier introductions to Whitehead's thought admits that this view raises "a particularly serious problem," but insists that such an interpretation is the only one which is true to Whitehead's denial of a loss of immediacy in God. Professor A. H. Johnson writes:

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[4] PR 54.

[5] Christian, p. 287.

> _If_ God were a "society," each member of which exemplified the distinctively divine primordial nature and then passed on, providing data for another, similar, actual entity, this whole series being called God; then one of the most essential characteristics of God would be lost--the retension of immediacy. If God were a society, there would be an inescapable loss of divine content since the linkage between members of a society is the process of transfer of content, and this involves elimination.[7]

Johnson's point is well-taken. Some loss is the inevitable consequence of temporal succession, particularly the loss of the objectified occasion's subjective immediacy. An object is always felt as being "other" than the feeling subject; the object is not experienced by the subject with the same richness of feeling or sense of immediacy that the object felt itself or the subject feels itself.

In the internal process (i.e., the "process of becoming,)[8] which constitutes _an_ actual entiy, however, there is no loss. The "first" phases of an entity's becoming is not tempo--

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[6] _Ibid_., p. 393. Cf. pp. 409f., 411

[7] A. H. Johnson, _Whitehead's Theory of Reality_ (Boston: Beacon Press, 1952), p. 69.

[8] See above, pp. 40f.

rally prior to, nor the object of, "subsequent" phases. This is true because temporality does not apply to this type of process.[9] Because an occasion is a unity of feeling, i.e., because it occurs "all at once," subjective immediacy is retained throughout the process of concrescence.

According to Whitehead, there is no loss of immediacy or "immediate unison" in God.[10] The moment of my beginning this paragraph is considerably less "real" to me than is the present moment. The latter is experienced directly or "first-hand;"[11] the former is merely the object of the present moment--it is experienced "second-hand."[12] It is apparently Whitehead's doctrine that no such distinction exists in God's experience. There are no moments in God's life less immediate to him than others. Therefore it appears mandatory that God be interpreted as an actual entity in Whitehead's system, as one "unison of feeling," as a single process of continuous synthesis with uninterrupted immediacy. Whitehead's statements that God is always in concrescence[13] and has no past[14] tend to confirm the view that he, too, considered this a necessary conclusion.

If there were some advantage in doing so, one could avoid the doctrine that God is an actual entity by discarding the doctrine of the retention of immediacy in God. This doccannot be relinquished, however, without to some degree affecting Whitehead's view of God's consequent nature. To be specific, such an omission would eliminate the possibility of affirming that all occasions are equally preserved as living, ever present facts in the consequent nature of God.[15] The result would be that temporal occasions prehended by God at any given moment in his succession would be known to him "first-hand," whereas occasions which had been originally prehended by him in a past moment would be remembered, i.e., known "second-hand" via a prehension of the past prehensions of that past occasion.

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[9] See above, p. 41, for an explanation of such terms as "first" and "subsequent" in the discussion of an occasion's concrescence.

[10] PR 531.

[11] PR 206.

[12] PR 234.

[13] PR 47.

While it is usually held that Whitehead's practice and principles require the view that God is _an_ actual entity, Professor John B. Cobb, Jr. has recently presented important argumentation to the contrary.[16] It is Cobb's contention that while "Whitehead himself thought of God as _an_ actual entity . . . the doctrines he formulated about God compel us to assimilate God more closely to the conception of a living person. . . ."[17] Professor Cobb proceeds to his conclusion from two important affirmations made by Whitehead about God--first, that God is causally efficacious, and second, that God achieves satisfaction. Regarding the first point, Cobb writes:

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[15] See PR 517, 531.

[16] Cobb is not the first to claim that Whitehead's God is or ought to be considered a society with personal order. Charles Hartshorne took this position in _The Divine Relativity_ (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), pp. 30f. And Ivor Leclerc seems to interpret Whitehead in this manner at times (see Leclerc, p. 207), but this is by no means always the case (cf. pp. 192-95).

[17] John B. Cobb, Jr., _A Christian Natural Theology_ (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1965), p. 188.

> The argument begins with the fact that Whitehead recognizes process in the consequent nature of God. Such process must be conceived either as the kind of process that occurs between occasions or as the kind that occurs within an occasion. Whitehead's position that God is an entity requires the latter doctrine. But the chief distinction between internal process and physical time is that the process occurring within an occasion has no efficacy for other occasions except indirectly through the satisfaction in which it eventuates. If the process in God's consequent nature is thought of in these terms, it cannot affect the events in the world. Yet Whitehead explicitly affirms just such an influence. Furthermore, if in light of the discussion in the preceding section, we recognize the indissoluble unity of the primordial and consequent natures of God even in God's function as principle of limitation, then we must acknowledge that which is involved is not only the special case of the causal efficacy of God's consequent nature, but also the basic efficacy of God in the provision of the initial aim for each occasion. God's causal efficacy for the world is like the efficacy of completed occasions for subsequent occasions and not like that of phases of the becoming of a single occasion for its successors.
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> Since Whitehead unquestionably affirms the causal efficacy of the consequent nature of God, the problem also occurs for his explicit formulation. We must either reject this doctrine of the causal efficacy of the consequent nature and also affirm that an entirely static God can have particularity of efficacy for each occasion, or else we must recognize that the phases in the concrescence of God are in important respects more analogous to temporal occasions than to phases in the becoming of a single occasion.[18]

Nothing less is at stake here, Cobb believes, than the highly important doctrine that God affects and is affected by the temporal world. The evidence for this unfolds when we recall that an occasion influences and is influenced by another only through prehending and being prehended. For Whitehead insists that each concrescence is entirely private; that is, an occasion is influenced by another only at the beginning of its own concrescence, and it influences another occasion only in the cessation of its own concrescence. Therefore, if God's life is not characterized by moments of experience which cease and begin anew, God cannot, by Whitehead's principles, be said to influence or to be influenced by temporal occasions. Yet if God is characterized by a succession of completed units of experience, then, as Cobb argues, we seem compelled "to assimilate God more closely to the conception of a living person."

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[18] Ibid., pp. 188f.

It might be replied that God should be conceived as being one, single actual entity, unique in the sense that he is the only such entity whose concrescence is not private. Unfortunately for this suggestion, Whitehead's doctrine of the privacy of concrescence--even of God's--is not easily discarded. To argue that God could be affected at a "point" during his concrescence is to overlook the fact that, for Whitehead, an actual entity is a concrescence and a concrescence is a single synthesis of a single body of data. An occasion of ex--perience is the process of unifying a specific datum. When another datum is presented for synthesis, a new occasion occurs. In Whitehead's language, an actual entity can originate from only one universe and is constituted by only one synthesis. Moreover, to deny the privacy of God's concrescence requires that there be real temporal lapse between the phases in which diverse data are received. But Whitehead emphatically denies that one phase of concrescence is temporally distinct from another. Any other position would seem to threaten his epochal theory of time by dividing epochs into sub-epochs, etc., a division which in principle could continue into infinity. Cobb's contention, it seems, is not easily undermined.

Professor Cobb's second argument takes as its basis Whitehead's habit of speaking of God's satisfaction. He writes:

> In all other entities satisfaction is not attained except as the completion of the entity. If God is a single entity who will never be completed, then on this analogy, he can never know satisfaction. It would be odd that God should eternally aim at a goal that is principle unreachable, and Whitehead repeatedly refers to God's satisfaction as something real. Apparently satisfactions are related to the successive phases in God's becoming as they are related to temporal actual occasions and not as they are related to successive phases of the becoming of such occasions.[19]

It will be seen, I believe, that the thrust of Cobb's statement is not only that God would be odd if he were an actual entity without achieving satisfaction, but that if God did not reach satisfaction he would fail to be causally efficacious. Again the reason springs from the necessity of the doctrine of the privacy of concrescence, discussed above. To speak of an occasion being prehended before it is completed is highly questionable. For an actual entity is what it is at its completion or satisfaction, simply because an actual entity is a completed concrescence of feelings.

Given Whitehead's total teaching, it is as difficult to deny the logic of the view that God is a living person (or a personally ordered society) as it seemed earlier to reject the argument that God is a single actual entity. In order to account for God's causal efficacy one is required to think of God as a living person. In order to allow for the retention of all occasions equally in his uninterrupted immediacy one must construe God as a single actual entity. Each conclusion has its independent basis. I therefore believe that one who follows Whitehead is faced with a decision which Whitehead overlooked. To affirm God to be a living person is to sacrifice "equality of immediacy" in God for a situation in which past moments are in principle slightly less "real" to God than the moment of his present experience. To affirm God to be an actual entity is to sacrifice a God acting and being acted upon for an uncompleted divinity growing toward but never reaching a glorious whole. The former choice seems to me to take little if anything from the adequacy of Whitehead's view of God by most theistic standards, while the latter appears to save nothing more than a vague intuition neither systematically necessary nor experientially meaningful.[20]

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[19] Ibid., pp. 189f.

The Spatio-Temporal Region of God

We have been confronted with the problem of the nature of God vis a vis that of an actual entity. Whatever our de-- cision as to how Whitehead's God is most properly interpreted, i.e., as _an_ actual entity or as a living person, we are still left with another problem in understanding Whitehead. This one has to do with the location of God. For whether God is _an_ entity or a series of personally ordered occasions, he nevertheless would somehow be related to the spatio-temporal realm. It is the nature of this relationship that Whitehead failed to clarify.

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[20] It may be significant that only once (PR 531) does Whitehead clearly take the view that there is no loss of immediacy in God.

The problem of the location of God arises because, although Whitehead sometimes spoke of God as being non-temporal,[21] he found it exceedingly important to maintain God's essential relatedness to temporal succession. But we may go even further. Space-time in Whitehead's system is constituted by the procession of becoming occasions. Occasions are extensive, and space is but an abstraction from this character of occasions. Similarly, occasions are durational, and time is an abstraction from this. Even if God is a living person, he is still, so to speak, composed of actual entities. Hence, on either interpretation, we must ask whether God, too, is such as to constitute spatiality and temporality.

The answer to this question must be either that God is spatio-temporal, or that he is not. If God is spatio-temporal we could either take the position that God has a particular region, or else that God's spatio-temporal region includes all other regions. In short, there seem to be three plausible answers to the question "where is God?" We may say (1) that God occupies no spatio-temporal region: (2) that God occupies a particular spatio-temporal region, or (3) that God's region includes all others.

The view that God occupies no spatio-temporal region seems most consonant with the doctrine that God is an actual entity. The argument might run as follows: Whitehead speaks of space and time as being abstractions from completed occasions. God, being an actual entity, never reaches completion. Hence, space and time, as understood in Whitehead's system, can be neither derived from nor ascribed to Whitehead's God. Somewhat in the sense that Aristotle's outer heaven is not in time but time is in it, so temporality would be included in God, but God himself would not be temporal.[22] In other words, the prehensions undergoing synthesis in God are prehensions of the sphere of temporal succession,[23] but because an actual entity is not itself internally successive the synthesis itself is somehow not temporally ordered. Moreover, since Whitehead accepts the view of modern physical theory that space and time in this cosmic epoch are inseparable,[24] space too, presumably, would be included in God, but God would not be spatial. Such a doctrine may be difficult to conceive, but one holding to it might well argue that the difficulty lies not in the illogicality of the position, but in the incurably spatio-temporal nature of our perspectives.[25]

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[21] See, eg., PR 11.

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[22] I am indebted to Professor Donald Sherburne in making this observation. Professor Sherburne suggested this as a possible analogy in a letter to Professor John Cobb, which the latter was kind enough to allow me to read.

[23] We are of course making the dubious assumption that a way could be found to counter the argument above that a single, eternal actual entity cannot be causally affected or efficacious.

[24] PR 123.

[25] It is not impossible, perhaps, to hold that God is not spatio-temporal while at the same time maintaining that

The second possible solution to the problem of God's location is the suggestion that God occupies a particular spatio-temporal region. Professor John T. Wilcox has forcefully argued that this position, however common to ordinary piety, is altogether untenable.[26] Wilcox first points out that modern physical theory has led to the demise of the Newtonian assumption of a universal simultaneity. Negatively, this means that all perspectives are relative, and that there is no absolute vantage point in space-time from which all relative perspectives might be judged or by which they might be corrected. For example, we may say that the light from the street lamp outside the window appears to us simultaneously with the light we now view from the moon. But quickly we would add that the moonlight we view really left its source seconds before the street light we see. Now, according to the new physics, "really" is a relative thing. In fact, there is no spatio-temporal position from which one might arrive at a universally true computation concerning the relation of the moonlight and that light from the street. No

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God is a personally ordered society. For one could arbitrarily define time and space as being properties only of the succession of becoming occasions other than those in the series constituting God's life. Regardless of the definition, however, God would still exemplify all of the properties characteristic of serially ordered societies of occasions which are spatio-temporal. Thus the question of the relationship of God and what is meant by "spatio-temporality," irrespective of definition, would seem to arise intuitively. I do not think it unfair, therefore, to conclude that this position is merely ignoring the problem rather than solving it.

[26] John T. Wilcox, "A Question from Physics for Certain Theists," The Journal of Religion (October, 1961), pp. 293-300.

one perspective can compute the street light I see now to have left its source before the moonlight I now see and have its computation to correspond to the reckoning of all other perspectives. But from vastly different perspectives, accurate calculations will vary concerning this relationship. In short, there are disagreeing spatio-temporal perspectives, each of which provides equally valid calculations.

Assuming the validity of this view, if God were to have a particular spatio-temporal region he would find his own calculations agreeing with some perspectives and disagreeing with others. This is at least a rather curious situation for God. In the first place, "it would seem that to decide which space-time system God utilizes for purposes of knowledge would grant to that system . . . a unique relationship with the deity, a relationship discriminatory against other events and their space-time systems."[27] Furthermore, if God is really prehended by temporal events, as Whitehead holds, it would appear that we ought to catch some trace of the space-time system with which he operates (assuming it to be different from our own.)[28]

Professor Wilcox's conclusions are not entirely unanswerable, it seems to me. Regarding the first one, it would really be of little significance to be excluded from sharing a spatio-temporal system with God. To be so "discriminated against" would by no means logically prevent God from prehending an occasion's perspectivally conditioned calculations at the same time that the occasion's other feelings are prehended as objectively immortal. That is, God would not necessarily know more about an occasion occupying his own time system thann he would about one in a different time system. In fact, precisely because space and time are derivative from actual entities, God would discover that other perspectives do exist only by first prehending the actual entities of whom those perspectives are characteristic.

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[27] *Ibid*., p. 296.

[28] *Ibid*.

The thrust of Wilcox's second conclusion, that if this theory of God's location be true we ought to find some evidence of God's own space-time system by prehending God, can also be mitigated to some degree. The major share of God's influence on the world originates in his provision of an initial aim to each occasion of experience. Presumably, felt most forcefully by each becoming occasion in its hybrid feeling of God's ordering is the possibility (i.e., eternal object) that each occasion calculate spatio-temporal relationships in a manner appropriate to its perspective. Hence no evidence of God's spatio-temporal region should occur here. A secondary source of God's influence originates in the prehension by at least some temporal occasion of God's consequent nature. An occasion's prehension of God's spatio-temporal region would be of this sort, for God's perspective would be consequent upon his relatedness to other actual entities. One could argue, if he wished, that the prehension of God's consequent (or, more accurately, "superjective") nature is a very exceptional occurrence. Whitehead surely does not contradict this assertion, and there is every reason to believe that a sensitivity to the "kingdom of heaven" (as Whitehead once refers to this mode of God's influence on the world[29]) is an extraordinary prehension indeed. Against this position, however, Professor Wilcox would rightly protest that at least those few entities which have enjoyed this peculiar mode of prehension ought then to know something of God's spatio-temporal region. One answer to this objection would be that in fact they do. But if one believed that no such knowledge existed, he could argue, I suppose, that in the provision of an initial aim to each occasion, God intentionally lures that occasion to prehend him in his superjective nature quite apart from the particularity of the divine space-time system.

If the foregoing discussion is correct, it would seem that it is entirely possible to express within the framework of Whitehead's philosophy the view that God is "somewhere out in space," a view usually associated with less sophisticated forms of religious belief. Admittedly, however, the application of modern physics to such a doctrine of God's location leads to results that are odd at the very least. This, coupled with the modern hesitance to put God somewhere "out there" just beyond the orbiting satelites of man might well lead one to seek other alternatives.

The third possible answer to the question of God's location is the view that God's region includes all other regions without the included regions being related to God as part to whole, eg., as a page related to a book. This view has been presented by Professor John Cobb. The foundation of Cobb's position is his insistence upon the possibility of regional inclusion, which in turn is based upon Whitehead's understanding of the unity of an actual entity.

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[29] PR 532.

> Fundamentally the unity of an actual occasion is the unity of its subjective immediacy culminating in its satisfaction. Its unity does not derive from the specificity of its standpoint or region. . . . It is the occasions in their concrete immediacy which provide the principle of unity, not the standpoints.
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> Thus far there is no dispute. My contention is, however, that if the unity of the occasion does not reside in its standpoint, then a single region may be included in the standpoints of more than one occasion without affecting the discrete individuality of the occasions in question. This means that the inclusion of one region by another would not entail inclusion of one actual occasion by another.[30]

According to Cobb, the relationship of two occasions, one including the other, would be no different than that of any other occasions. For example, contemporaries would not prehend each other "since the entities participating in this special regional relationship would still prehend each other only when they had passed into objective immortality."[31] In short, all the principles governing the relatedness of any two actual entities, including the principle of the privacy of concrescence, would obtain in the case of regionally including and included occasions. Secondly, Cobb believes that his interpretation of

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[30] Cobb, p. 86.

[31] Ibid., p. 195.

Whitehead is entirely consistent with Whitehead's philosophical principles in every respect. That Whitehead himself did not make explicit this position is no argument against its significance. It may only indicate that Whitehead explicitly took no position on this issue of God's location because he did not see or was not interested in the problem. Finally, Professor Cobb's interpretation of God's location has the advantage of being as amenable to the view that God is an actual entity as it is to Cobb's own doctrine that God is a personally ordered society.

If accepted, Cobb's view enables one to avoid the ambiguity of saying that God is not spatio-temporal, and the incredibility (to some moderns, anyway) of saying that God is located somewhere in particular. As compared to the first view which claims that the relationship of God and space-time cannot be conceptualized by those bound to the spatio-temporal sphere, Professor Cobb offers us an analogy. "If we can think of the spatio-temporal regions of the human person (i.e., one's continuous thread of experience) as including the spatio-temporal regions of the numerous occasions of the brain, then we may think analogously of the region of God as including the region comprizing the standpoints of all the contemporary occasions of the world."[32] In contrast to the view that God, because of his special space-time system, is restricted to agreeing with the private, calculated knowledge of some occasions and disagreeing with others, Cobb provides a way to view God as sharing every perspective. God's spatio-temporal region includes the region of every occasion and thus God experiences their diverse perspectives within his own.

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[32] Ibid., pp. 195f.

Prior to the present chapter, I attempted to give an exposition of Whitehead's philosophy, showing its progression to his doctrine of God. Hence, whenever significantly different interpretations seemed possible, considerable effort was made to determine the option chosen by Whitehead. In the present chapter, to which prior discussion led, we reached several theological options, all of which consider themselves to be completely valid developments of an "orthodox" Whiteheadian perspective. It is true that some of these options seem to me to involve considerable alterations of Whitehead's philosophic vision.[33] Nevertheless, none of them intends to be saying anything other than what was said by Whitehead. Each position discussed in this chapter sees itself as fully maintaining the core of assumptions from which were developed Whitehead's view of possibility,,actuality, process, etc. Moreover, each position presents itself as being most credible because it expresses more adequately than the others, affirmations which Whitehead seemed to think important to arrive at, but which he failed to fit explicitly into his system.

There is a second set of doctrines of God which result from intended modifications of Whitehead's position. Some of these claim only to make minor shifts; others are based on changes which are more radical. Some of these theologies are well developed contributions of modern or contemporary philosophical theologians. Others are only vaguely expressive of views currently espoused. I would argue, however, that all of these views are systematically possible, and that they are well (if not best) expressed in the terms of a process philosophy closely approximating and dependent upon the system of Whitehead. It is to these doctrines that we now shall turn.

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[33] I argued, for example, that viewing God as an actual entity seemed to make of dubious meaning the assertion that God affects and is affected by the world.

CHAPTER VI

PANENTHEISTIC WHITEHEADIAN THEOLOGY

In previous chapters I have attempted to show how Whitehead's understanding of personal experience led him to view reality as being composed of discrete units of synthesized feelings called actual entities--a view apparently corroborated to some degree by contemporary physics. I have also tried to make clear that, given certain presuppositions, this doctrine of actual entities involves Whitehead's theory of possibilities or eternal objects. Finally, I sought to show that in order to account for the ordered relevance of possibility for actuality, Whitehead developed his concept of God as the supreme actual entity "purposefully" embracing both actual occasions and eternal objects.

Whitehead did not argue that the progression of his philosophical thought was in any strict sense logically compelling. He recognized the decisive role played by assumptions which seemed to him to be more or less self-evident, but which were assumptions nonetheless. He intended to be sensitive to these recurring presuppositions and to lay them bare for the reader to consider. Therefore, it is perhaps easier in Whitehead's philosophy than in some others to lift out the steps of the development toward his doctrine of God and to see plainly the presuppositions prompting each step. Because of this, it is also easy to note alternative paths which might be taken at each significant juncture of Whitehead's thought, alternatives which would lead us to a doctrine of the nature of God different from Whitehead's own.

In the present chapter we shall consider some of the alternatives arising within the general framework of Whitehead's idea of God as the supreme actual entity. It is impossible to suggest all of these here, but some of the more significant options seem to be the following:

(A) One could agree with Whitehead that God *establishes* the ontological reality of eternal objects, that he *envisions* all possibility in his primordial vision, and that he preferentially *mediates* possibility and actuality. In spite of this large area of agreement, room for important changes remain. For example, if one holds that Whitehead's understanding of possibility is deficient because possibilities themselves evolve, God's primordial nature will be substantially altered from the corresponding element in Whitehead's theology.

This is precisely the claim upon which Professor Charles Hartshorne bases his deviation from Whitehead's idea of God. Hartshorne's view, called "panentheism," marks a significant contribution to contemporary process theology. A discussion of the reasons for his differences with Whitehead and of Hartshorne's general theological position will occupy a major share of our attention in this chapter.

(B) What might be called the 'three-fold function of God,' just mentioned above, suggests other possible modifications of Whitehead's theology. For example, one could retain the doctrine of an actual entity who envisions all possibilities and who mediates possibility to actuality, but reject the notion that God is the ontological ground of the realm of the possible. Eternal objects considered in themselves, according to this view, would exist independently, "outside" of God's being in a sphere not unlike that of Plato's realm of Forms.[1]

It is important to understand that the issue between position (B) and Whitehead is not whether possibility is divinely created. Whitehead certainly never intends to suggest that God's primordial vision creates possibilities. What he does say is that the reality of possibility is inseparable from its being an object of the divine vision--inseparable, except by conceptual abstraction. Abstractly, one may distinguish the "inefficient disjunction" of possibility 'before' (i.e., apart from) God's envisagement from its "efficient conjunction" 'after' (i.e., by virtue of) its being divinely envisioned.[2] But this distinction is strictly conceptual, not ontological. Hence, Whitehead is careful to include that the efficient conjunction of possibility is in fact primordial.[3] This means quite simply that the inclusion of the realm of possibility in God is an eternal relationship. According to Whitehead, then, apart from God, unrealized possibility would be "nothing--nothing either in fact or in efficacy."[4] According to position (B), on the other hand, apart from God unrealized eternal objects would be "nothing" with respect to efficacy, but something nonetheless with respect to facticity.

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[1] This position is quite different from those "Platonic Whiteheadian" views to be discussed in the next chapter which eliminate the idea of God as an actual entity altogether.

[2] See PR 64.

[3] See PR 64.

(C) Position (B) is notable for more closely assimilating God and other actual entities, as we shall discuss below. It is possible, however, to accomplish this even more thoroughly. One could hold that God _envisions_ all possibility, but that he neither establishes possibility nor _necessarily_ mediates possibility and actuality. In principle at least, novel eternal objects could be (conceptually) prehended directly by temporal occasions just as they are by God.[5] In such cases novelty would not necessarily be mediated by God. Hence, while in the vast majority of instances the orderly ingression of eternal objects would be due in part to the ordering mediation of God,[6] in principle situations could arise in which order might be accounted for solely by the arising occasion's past and/or its own free decision. Professor John Cobb seems to be taking this view when he asks

> whether in principle the kind of decision by which eternal

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[4] PR 64.

[5] Conceptual prehensions are not uncommon in higher actual entities, to be sure, but they are always derived from physical prehensions.

[6] See above, pp. 74-77.

> objects become relevant for God is categorically impossible for all other actual entities. I see no reason to insist upon this absolute difference and could even suggest that at the highest levels of their intellectual functioning human occasions _may_ be able to conceive possibilities directly. . . . However, I do not wish to press any claim beyond this: Whitehead should not preclude _in principle_ the possibility that a temporal occasion may have toward some eternal object the kind of relation God has toward all.[7]

(D) A fourth possible alternative would be to hold that God neither establishes, nor envisions all, nor necessarily mediates possibility. In contrast to (C), this position would hold that there are real possibilities of which God is ignorant. God's superiority would reside not in the functions which the above positions ascribe to him in various ways, but solely in his character, i.e., his goodness.

The strength of positions (B), (C), and (D) must be understood in the light of a desire for philosophical coherence.[8] Clearly much that Whitehead says about God is hardly applicable to the other actual entities. Seemingly this casts doubt upon the coherence of Whitehead's views. The justification for these modifications, then, seems to be that they reduce or even eliminate the cause for this doubt by more closely assimilating God and temporal actual occasions. Increasingly, these three views relate God to eternal objects in the manner of all other actual entities, and, with the exception of (D) they appear to do this without violating the basic Whiteheadian vision of God.

There can be no doubt that Whitehead shares the desire for philosophical coherence.[9] In terms of theology, he insists that God not be made "an exception to all metaphysical principles, invoked to save their collapse."[10] Whitehead is highly critical of those philosophers for whom an appeal to God is *ad hoc*.[11] He insists that whatever is affirmed about the functions of God must be implied by the other elements of the system. Violation of this stipulation, Whitehead maintains, indicates a lack of "faith in reason [whic*h*] is the trust that the ultimate nature of things lie together in a harmony which excludes mere arbitrariness. It is the faith that at the base of things we shall not find mere arbitrary mystery."[12]

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[7] Cobb, pp. 202f.

[8] See above, p. 17.

Whitehead's goal of coherence therefore requires the development of a system in which every element is systematically related to the others. To posit one element of the system as the inexplicable basis of all others would constitute a failure to achieve that goal.

In the judgment of Professor Cobb, it is just this failure through which incoherence threatens. Cobb observes:

> According to the ontological principle, eternal objects cannot be effective for actual occasions except by the decision of some actual entity. . . . But in the case of God we seem to confront a total exception. Here all eternal objects are effective without the mediation of any other actual entity.
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> Either the ontological principle is simply inapplicable

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[9] See above, p. 17. [10] PR 521; cf. PR 78, 215, 217.

[11] On Plato, see AI 215 (171f.); on Descartes, see FR 24, PR 78, 219, 289; on Leibniz, see AI 170f. (137f.), PR 289; on Spinoza, see PR 10.

[12] SMW 37 (26).

to the relation of eternal objects to God (in which case incoherence threatens) or the decision to which the effectiveness of eternal objects for God is to be attributed is God's primordial decision.[13]

One question concerning positions (B), (C), and (D), as I see it, has to do with the broader implications of the ontological principle. This principle is fully accepted by the modifications under discussion in so far as it implies that "eternal objects cannot be effective for actual occasions except by the decision of some actual entity."[14] But according to Whitehead this principle also requires that "everything must be somewhere, and here 'somewhere' means 'some actual entity.'"[15] Hence the "where" of possibility is the "primordial mind of God."[16] The specific problem, it seems to me, is how potentiality located in God's primordial nature can be prehended by a temporal occasion without involving that occasion's hybrid physical prehension of God. Indeed, for a temporal occasion to so entertain a novel possibility would be most exceptional, quite _unlike_ the manner in which God envisages potentiality.[17]

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[13] Cobb, p. 202. [14] _Ibid_., p. 241. Cf. PR 36f., 73.

[15] PR 73. [16] PR 73.

[17] An obvious escape from this difficulty would involve the alteration of the ontological principle, making the realm of eternal objects objective to (in the sense of being outside of) God's primordial vision. From this point of view eternal objects could be said to lie outside of all actual entities. This development, however, raises the question of the "where" of these eternal objects. For Whitehead, there is no non-actual realm of forms or possibility, and the introduction of such a view implies a metaphysical dualism which may or may not be desirable. It is doubtful, at any rate, that those wishing to render Whitehead's own system more coherent would look with favor upon this path of development.

One might also ask whether God's obvious uniqueness does in fact introduce incoherence into Whitehead's system. That God grounds possibility, envisions all eternal objects, and mediates possibility and actuality does indeed suggest that he is, in regard to these functions, different from other actual entities. But it may also be the case that, far from being _ad hoc_, these functions are strictly implied by other elements of the system.[18] If so, this would seem to be all that is required by the ideal of coherence.

The foregoing discussion of Professor Cobb's modification of Whitehead in the interests of coherence, as well as that of positions (B) and (D), does not conclusively indicate that it is either invalid or unnecessary, though both points are raised. The more important point, in my judgment, is whether the entire question of incoherence is not eliminated when we follow Professor Cobb's interpretation of God as a personally ordered society of actual entities. With such a view it seems to me that God's entertainment of possibilities will in fact be like that of all other occasions, which is what positions (B), (C) and (D) desire anyway. Specifically, the conceptual entertainment of the total realm of eternal objects in a given moment of God's life would be derivative from God's hybrid prehension of the immediately past occasion in the divine life. God's purely conceptual prehensions of eternal objects, then, would always occur within the concrescence of each becoming occasion of his experience, and they would always be derived from hybrid physical feelings.[19] Both of these characteristics of God's conceptual prehensions correspond to what happens in temporal actual occasions. Coherence, at this point any rate, would be no question, and the ontological principle would remain quite intact.

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[18] The preceding chapters have attempted to show how Whitehead believes them to be implied, given the principles of process which his system assumes.

Thus far we have discussed positions (B) and (D), and position (C) which is Cobb's point of view. We have yet to consider alternative (A) which differs from Whitehead in holding that possibilities evolve. This view, as we noted above, is most thoroughly developed by Professor Charles Hartshorne. We shall now turn to an examination of his position.

Hartshorne's View of Reality

Hartshorne and Whitehead share the view that reality is social in character. However plausible this proposition may seem in view of personal experience and the patterns of modern physics, in Whitehead's thought it remains a hypothesis. But in Reality As Social Process, Hartshorne offers a unique argument for the assertion that reality is social. First, Hartshorne defines sociality as the character of entities which "feel, and feel in relation to each other's feelings."[20]

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[19] That Whitehead never speaks of God's hybrid prehensions of his own past only shows that Whitehead never clearly formulated the view that God is a historic route of occasions.

[20] Charles Hartshorne, Reality As Social Process (Free Press, 1953), p. 34.

He then observes that to ascribe this character to humans and higher animals is a commonplace.[21] Secondly, Professor Hartshorne points out that because supposedly non-social reality may be social to such a minimal degree as to be undetectable by the human observer, it is impossible that the idea of sociality be _known_ to be _inapplicable_ to this lower realm. Then follows a crucial step in the argument. If, says Hartshorne, "an idea /is/ actually known to be true in some cases, but /is/ not even potentially known to be false in any conceivable case, that idea is "for all purposes an ultimate idea."[22] Sociality is just such an idea. Therefore, we are justified in speaking of sociality as an ultimate idea, i.e., as being applicable to all aspects of reality. In other words, reality is social.

Professor Hartshorne's arguments for the doctrine that social reality is ultimately a process or becoming are well-known. The view he sets forth is this: That which is being can contain no becoming. Reality does contain becoming. Therefore, reality cannot be being in any ultimate sense. Now since reality must be either being or becoming, and since it is not the former, it must be the latter. Reality, that is, is ultimately becoming or process--asocial process which contains being as its abstract character.[23]

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[21] _Ibid_.

[22] _Ibid_., p. 83.

[23] Hartshorne, "Tillich's Doctrine of God," Charles W. Kegley and Robert W. Bretall, eds., _The Theology of Paul Tillich_ ("The Library of Living Theology," Vol. I; New York: Macmillan, 1956), pp. 169-72.

Hartshorne, like Whitehead, rejects monism and accepts a metaphysical pluralism. Also like Whitehead, Hartshorne adopts the view that the myriads of individuals constituting reality are organized into societies, interrelated by their feelings. Some of these societies are "democracies, that is, lacking in any ruling member, whereas others, for example, the society of cells forming the human body, possess such a member. We may call the non-democratic societies 'monarchies.'"[24] The totality of societies forming the universe is itself a society, at least to the degree that it is united by certain "ultimate principles." Three of these are chance, love, and incompatibility.[25] "Chance is the particularity of the particular, its Peircian firstness, spontaneity, originality--or, in Whiteheadian language, its self-creativity."[26] Every individual, to some degree, contributes to its own nature--it is partly self-caused--and "chance" is the term by which Hartshorne indicates this characteristic. Incompatibility is that trait of each entity whereby it is itself and not something else--its specificity. An individual's very actualization is an explicit rejection of certain other forms of actualization. At a higher level, incompatibility requires choices among possibilities. Hence, in many instances, tragedy is involved. Love, or harmony, is that character of things by which even discord or incompatibility is kept within the boundaries of a significant degree of order.

As in Whitehead's thought, an attempt to explain the apparent cosmic order leads Hartshorne to a doctrine of God.[27] He writes:

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[24] Hartshorne, Reality, p. 38.

[25] See Ibid., chapter five.

[26] Ibid., p. 87.

> The very moment we admit that individuals are to some extent free, it becomes a mystery what limits this freedom sufficiently to produce a reasonably orderly world. One may suppose that individuals limit one another, but not even human individuals, and still less others with which we are acquainted, possess the wisdom, power and benevolence to account for the maintenance of world order by a combination of self-control and benevolent sway over others. There is, I feel confident, no rational explanation possible here except this, that just as order is promoted (for a brief period) within an animal body by the unitary drives which make the animal an individual, so the world as a whole is held together through common habits, preeminent over all local ones, by virtue of which the world is itself a living individual--in this case a deathless (though not an unchanging!) one. Theism is only the elaboration of this view.[28]

The statement that "the world is itself a living individual" may be taken for a form of pantheism. This is not a correct understanding of Hartshorne. In the first place, to be included in an all-embracing unity, the other constituents of social process need only be known to the unifying cosmic entity. That is, knowledge is one manner of inclusion. It is, in Whitehead's terminology, a type of prehension. Each finite entity, says Hartshorne, is included in an omniscient living individual by being known to (thus, influencing) and knowing (thus, being influenced by) that entity. Again in Whiteheadian language, each temporal actual entity prehends and is prehended by God.

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[27] It might be observed that although this is the central, if not only, source of the move to theology in Whitehead's philosophy, Hartshorne also argues for the existence of God on other, purely rational grounds. See Hartshorne's most recent discussion of the ontological argument in "Ten Ontological or Model Proofs for God's Existence," The Logic of Perfection and Other Essays in Neoclassical Metaphysics (LaSalle, Illinois: Open Court, 1962).

The reader may wish to compare Whitehead's rather different views of the nature of proof, discussed above, p

[28] Hartshorne, Beyond Humanism (Willett, Clark & Co., 1937), pp. 162f. Cf. also Reality As Social Process, pp. 39, 135.

Hartshorne also avoids pantheism in another way. Although finite individuals compose a cosmic entity in the manner just described, this cosmic entity is not simply the sum of those prehended entities. It is also something in itself. There is in every individual an abstract aspect which is unrelated to, and hence transcends, the social process.[29] This, therefore, is true also of the cosmic entity, as we shall see.

Rather than pantheism, then, the conception of God to which Hartshorne's argument leads is that of

> a social being, dominant or ruling over the world society, yet not merely from outside, in a tyrannical or non-social way; but rather as that member of the society which exerts the supreme conserving and coordinating influence. . . .
>
> God is not viewed as a being that could exist in solitary independence, but as the being uniquely able to maintain the society of which it is member, the _only_ social being unconditionally able to guarantee the survival, the minimal integrity, of its society, and of itself as member of that society.[30]

Hartshorne's Doctrine of God

Although the vocabulary is different, the method somewhat more rationalistic, and the spirit more akin to Idealism, the position taken by Professor Charles Hartshorne to this point is not substantially different from that of Whitehead. Even as we turn to the doctrine of God we seem to find essential agreement, notably in the doctrine of God's two natures.

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[29] Hartshorne, _Divine Relativity_ (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), p. 32.

[30] Hartshorne, _Reality_, pp. 40f.

Hartshorne's doctrine of the two natures of God is but an elaboration of his doctrine of the two natures of every entity. The basis of this doctrine is the theory of internal and external relations. Hartshorne follows G. E. Moore's definition of external relations as being those in which "the entity said to be externally related could have been the same had the relations not obtained." "For example, the number two, which I think of, would have been the number two even though I had never thought of it."[31]

While a cognitive relation, such as my thinking of the number two, is external to that which is known, it is internal to the knower.[32] Internal relations, of course, are those in which the entity thus related is affected by the relationship. To be so related is to possess something in addition to what was previously contained. Take for example the relation of A and B. Because "the relation possesses the term, . . . A, to which the relation is internal, in possessing the relation, possesses the term B also."[33]

On the basis of his analysis of relations, Hartshorne distinguishes the absolute, independent (i.e., externally related) aspect of an entity from its relative, dependent (i.e., internally related) aspect.[34] By "absolute" Hartshorne means the abstract character which each persisting entity exemplifies in each moment of its succession--for example, the "enduring 'character' a man exhibits under diverse circumstances and through diverse experiences, sensations, feelings."[35] Wisdom, honesty, kindness, etc. are unaffected by any of their particular manifestations. Hence, they are externally related in these manifestations. Hence, they are absolute.

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[31] Hartshorne, _Divine_ _Relativity_, p. 62; cf. pp. 6f., 93.

[32] _Ibid_., p. 7.

[33] Ibid., p. 65. Cf. Ibid., p. 67, where Hartshorne speaks of relation as constituting a part of the being of terms related internally.

To be relative, of course, is to be internally related. All entities are relative, but only the "weak sense" of the term. That is, they are "related to a mere portion of the actual totality of terms permitting such relativity, and not to all aspects even of these. . . ."[36]

Now, according to Hartshorne, God is both absolute and relative in a preeminent sense. God is the most relative of all individuals. He is the supreme subject for whom every other entity is an object.[37] Therefore, it is not incorrect to say that God, in his relative aspect, "literally contains"[38] the universe; he is the "total actual being of a given moment, with all achieved determinations."[39] But to say that God includes all, rather than denying the unique individuality of each included entity, is merely another way of saying that God is omniscient.[40]

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[34] *Ibid.*, pp. xii, 6, 67.

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 80; cf. pp. 74f.

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 76.

[37] *Ibid.*, pp. 70f.

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 90.

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 88.

> To be relative in the eminent sense will (accordingly) be to enjoy relations with all that is, in all its aspects.... Only an all-knowing being can, in any intelligent sense, be thus supremely relative to all beings. For such relativity means that every difference makes a difference _in_ the all-relative one, that for every diversity anywhere there is a diversity of relationships _in_ him. Only the conception of an intuition whose datum is the universe gives any positive meaning to such an idea.[41]

Hartshorne gladly accepts the fact that God's relativity implies God's dependence, at least in the sense that God's knowledge of the world implies God's dependence upon it. But nothing, says Hartshorne, could be more desirable, for "the higher the being the more dependence of certain kinds will be appropriate for it."[42]

> Supreme dependence will thus reflect all influences--with infinite sensitivity registering relationship to the last and least item of events. Is this not genuinely something eminent and supreme? Could any man exhibit such sensitivity, or anything remotely approaching it? Obviously not.[43]

Only by the decision of such a supremely sensitive entity should any intelligent man desire the direction of the world to be influenced.[44]

There is an important difference between ordinary relativity, such as our own, and the supreme relativity belonging to God. God's relativity is "unrestricted in scope."[45]

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[40] Hartshorne argues carefully that God's omniscience means not that God knows the future as he knows the past and present, but that he knows "the actual as actual and . . . the possible as possible." See _Ibid_., p. 121.

[41] _Ibid_., pp. 76f.

[42] _Ibid_., p. 48.

[43] _Ibid_., p. 76; cf. also p. 123.

[44] _Ibid_., p. 51.

[45] _Ibid_., p. 11.

> God is relative, but what we may call the extent of his relativity is wholly independent of circumstances, wholly nonrelative. Regardless of circumstances, . . . God will enjoy unrestricted cognitive relativity to all that coexists with him. By contrast, the extent of our human relativity is itself a relative matter, varying with circumstances. It varies all the way from the minimal cognitive relatedness of a man in deep sleep . . . to the maximal reflection of objects in full waking consciousness of a man. . . .[46]

Hartshorne knows of objections to attributing relativity--hence dependence, hence change--to God. He deals with two of these as follows:

> But if God changes, it is argued, then he changes either for the worse or for the better. If the former, how can we admire him without stint? If the latter, then it seems he must previously have lacked something, and been incomplete and imperfect. The first horn of the dilemma need not concern us, unless it can be proved that there is ever more sorrow than joy in the world. For if there is always more satisfaction than dissatisfaction, then God should always have more reason to rejoice than to grieve over the world, and since he can retain the consciousness of past joys, there will always be a net increment of value accruing to God at each moment. Now if life were not more satisfying than otherwise, could it go on? Is there anything to maintain the will to live save satisfaction in living? I do not see that there is. Hence I shall confine my attention to the second horn of the dilemma. . . . My reply is that, as we are here using the term, perfect means completely worthy of admiration and respect, and so the question becomes, is such complete admirableness infringed by the possibility of enrichment in total value? I say it is not. . . . If God rejoices less today than he will tomorrow, but ideally appropriately at both times, our reverence for him should in no way be affected by the increase in joy. Indeed, if he were incapable of responding to a better world with greater satisfaction, this should infringe upon our respect; for it would imply a lack of proportionality in the divine awareness of things.[47]

Many find Hartshorne's argument on the latter point both convincing and refreshing. God's perfection is taken to be correlative with his being worthy of worship, and this is said to be grounded in the "appropriateness" of the divine response to what is given him. In effect, God's perfection refers to the quality of his response to the world.

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[46] Ibid., p. 82.

[47] Ibid., pp. 45-47.

The position taken by Hartshorne on the first "horn of the dilemma," however, might be criticized in two ways--it is experientially dubious, and it stands in sharp tension with the remainder of Hartshorne's doctrine. In the first place, it is by no means self-evident that there is a total increase of joy over a long span of time, nor is it universally accepted that there is at the present time more joy than sorrow. Indeed, a widespread philosophical mood has arisen within the past generation or two which would challenge Hartshorne's optimism most radically. That the will to live is usually (but not always!) maintained may prove only that men are usually fools, not that life is worth living. Therefore, if the divine worth or "admirableness" is based solely on there always being a "net increment of value accruing to God at each moment," that worth, some would say, is highly questionable at the present and by no means secured for the future.

But such a criterion of God's character seems to me to stand in marked contrast to Hartshorne's own understanding of God. If the criterion of God's admirableness in the discussion of the "second horn" is the quality of the divine response, why should it be, in the first, the content of that to which God responds? Hartshorne ought to maintain, I believe, that God would continue to be perfect so long as his response was appropriate, whether joy increases or decreases. God's perfection would thus lie as much in his perfect bearing of sorrow, whatever its degree, as in his perfect sharing of joy. Then an analysis of the amount of joy or sorrow in the world would be irrelevant to a discussion of the worth of God--except, perhaps to question whether the divine response was appropriate. In any event, the worth of God would rest upon his own volition, not upon the course of natural and human history.

The fact remains, of course, that for Hartshorne's position _if_ things were to go very, very badly, God too would suffer severly. For in a doctrine where God is supremely involved in finite occurrences and where God rules by persuasion, not by force, there is finally no guarantee that God's persuasive power will be victorious. Hence, there is no ontological certainty that God will not be supremely grieved. Precisely what this might mean for God is unclear.[48] But it is not unclear that the doctrine of God's relativity means that of all individuals, God himself enjoys most, and suffers most, too.

The Absolute Aspect of God

On the basis of his theory of relations, Hartshorne claims that there is no contradiction in maintaining that the relative can include an aspect that is absolute. The gist of his position is as follows:

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[48] Professor Hartshorne claims that things could never go so badly that God would fail to maintain a society. (_Reality_, p. 41.) Perhaps this is because Hartshorne judges non-existence to be inconceivable, and all existence is social.

> But though the all-inclusive cannot, in its inclusiveness, be absolute, yet, since it includes all things, it can perfectly well include something absolute. For to be included is, we have argued, an external relation, a relation of which the included is a term, but not a subject. Therefore, the absolute can exist in the supremely relative, in serene independence, serene exemption from relativity. For it is not the absolute which has the relation, "in" the actual relative, but rather and only the relative which has the relation, "containing" the absolute; just as it is the particular subject which has the cognitive relation to the object, while the latter is only nominally "in" this relation.[49]

It is obvious, of course, that the absolute aspect of God is that element in his being which is non-relative, or, to be precise, related externally.[50] In fact, according to Hartshorne this aspect is even externally related to God's being as a whole, for "a whole has (internal) relation to its parts, but . . . a part need not have (internal) relation to the whole."[51] God in his absolute being, then, is independent of, or unaffected by, whatever occurs in the world and even in himself. In this sense, Hartshorne continues the classical doctrine of God's impassibility. But God's independence is not total. Hartshorne avoids the paradox of the "wholly other" by maintaining that God, in his absolute aspect, is "independent of any particular subject, (but) . . . not independent of subjectivity as such. . . ."[52] This means, I assume, that unlike the completely self-contained deity of much medieval theology, Hartshorne's God is dependent for his experience upon there being some world, but not dependent upon any particular world or any particular element in the world.

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[49] Hartshorne, Divine Relativity, pp. 86f.

[50] Ibid., pp. xii, 18f., 67, 76.

[51] Ibid., p. 69.

[52] Ibid., p. 87; cf. also pp. 71ff.

While all individuals are in some sense absolute, God's absoluteness is unique in degree. Even as God's relativity was perfect because he was the supreme subject for all objects, so his absoluteness is unsurpassed because God is the "object for all subjects."[53] Professor Hartshorne does not draw back from the implication of this doctrine. "Only God," he writes, "can be so universally important that no subject can ever wholly fail or ever have failed to be aware of him (in however dim or unreflective a fashion)."[54]

In spite of the relevance of the above discussion, we still have not been given a very concrete answer to the question: What is God's absolute aspect? Whitehead's identification of the apparent counterpart to this divine aspect in his own theology was very clear: God's primordial nature is God's eternal valuation of the total realm of possibility. Hartshorne's answer to the question is equally definite but it is not at all similar, in spite of the marked similarity of their positions heretofore. The key to this philosophical parting of the ways is Hartshorne's rejection of Whitehead's doctrine of possibility or eternal objects. We shall examine the basis of Hartshorne's rejection of Whitehead's position before discussing more substantively Hartshorne's version of God's absolute nature.

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[53] *Ibid*., p. 70.

[54] *Ibid*., p. 70; cf. also p. 67.

On the question of the nature of possibility, Hartshorne is indebted to Charles Sanders Peirce rather than to Whitehead. Peirce once wrote:

> Looking upon the course of logic as a whole we see that it proceeds from the question to the answer--from the vague to the definite. And so likewise all the evolution we know of proceeds from the vague to the definite. . . .
>
> From this point of view we must suppose that the existing universe, with all its arbitrary secondness, is an offshoot from, or an arbitrary determination of, a world of ideas, a Platonic world. . . .
>
> If this be correct, we cannot suppose the process of derivation . . . began elsewhere than in the utter vagueness of completely undetermined and dimensionless potentiality.
>
> The evolutionary process is therefore, not a mere evolution of the existing universe, but rather a process by which the very Platonic forms themselves have become or are becoming developed.[55]

The idea of the evolution of forms or possibilities is important for understanding Hartshorne's work. Equally important is a related idea suggested by Peirce--the idea that possibilities form a continuum without distinct division. According to Peirce:

> The evolution of forms begins or, at any rate, has for an early stage of it, a vague potentiality; and that either is or was followed by a continuum of forms having a multitude of dimensions too great for the individual dimensions to be distinct. It must be by a contraction of the vagueness of that potentiality of everything in general, but of nothing in particular, that the world of forms comes about.[56]

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[55] Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, eds., The Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce, 8 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931-58), paragraphs 190-94.

[56] Ibid., paragraphs 196-99.

Hartshorne applies the composite idea of the evolution of a continuum of forms to colors and then to mathematical points:

> In order to account for the emergence of new qualities in the world-process, . . . we must introduce . . . the dimension of degree of definiteness or specificity. When a color is seen by means of the peripheral part of the retina, it is not indentifiable as any particular chroma, but neither is it that definitely non-chromatic quality called "gray." It is rather a chromatically indeterminate quality, and this indeterminateness is its quality. . . the category of indefiniteness /expresses/. . . the very dimension of cosmic creation. . . .
>
> A confirmation of this suggestion is found, surprisingly enough, in the mathematics of continuity. For just as the point cannot intelligibly be viewed as the actually existent element of space, nor the latter as a mere aggregate of points, so it is impossible to treat a qualitative member of a continuously varying series, like that of the colors, as literally a constituent of the continuum of color. Rather we are forced to construe the idea of a strictly single and absolutely definite color as an ideal limit of an abstractive set of more and more definite colors. In the midst of mathematical continuity the germ of qualitative evolution is thus sown, and an intelligible view of emergence is provided for. According to this view, the emergent is not utterly incomparable to the pre-existing qualities, but is related to it as the more to the less determinate.[57]

Having argued that colors, points, etc. are ultimately continua, Hartshorne goes on to suggest that such supposedly distinct continua themselves comprize a continuum. He writes:

> The type of relation existing between colors, whereby one is connected with or shades into another through intermediaries, can be generalized so as to connect qualities from different senses (e.g., a color and a sound) or from different elementary classes (e.g., secondary and tertiary qualities) . . . .[58]

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[57] Hartshorne, The Philosophy and Psychology of Sensation (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934), pp. 207f; cf. p. 42.

[58] Ibid., p. 6.

In summary, Hartshorne holds that possibility is an evolving, ever-enlarging continuum (of continua) from which specific possibilities are abstractions. New possibilities arise as the continuum enlarges, and vice versa. The rise of new possibilities marks the advance of greater specificity from the generality of primordial vagueness. But "primordial vagueness" is an expression really more in keeping with Peirce's view than Hartshorne's. Indeed, it is here that Hartshorne also leaves his American mentor.

> Peirce spoke as though the qualitative continuum in its primordial or non-generated aspect were not only without definite qualities but without definite dimensions--indeed, without any distinctions or contrasts of any kind. But in that case it nearly coincides with Aristotle's prime matter and is an unintelligible and useless for explanation. It is in accord with Peirce's own suggestions, however, to try to conceive the absolutely primordial factor as simply the general principle of divine love, with whatever contrasts, or at least germinal dimensions, may be involved in that conception.[59]

Hartshorne has replaced Peirce's "vague potentiality" with "divine love" and "whatever contrasts . . . may be involved." That something non-divine (and extra-divine) should exist eternally along with divine love is implied by Hartshorne's doctrine that God, even though independent in one aspect, requires some "world" with which to be related, though no one world in particular. Presumably, new possibilities arise (or better, the continuum of possibility increases) as the primordial divine urge toward harmony seeks to overcome these contrasts already given to it. But Hartshorne does not say this. Nor does he speculate on the nature of these primordial "contrasts" or "germinal dimensions." One must assume, however, that the terms are meant as abstractions from the changing array of contrasts eternally present to God, for Hartshorne goes on to say that the only "eternal object" endlessly envisioned by God is his own love.[60] Then he adds:

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[59] *Ibid.*, p. 208.

> Its /the divine love's/ self-enjoyment is the inexhaustible fountain of all that through its benevolence should come into being (into a share in this enjoyment). This is the light which may indeed be conceived always to have been shed upon the natures and the existences of things. The world may be conceived as the increasing specification of the theme "feeling of feeling."[61]

Hartshorne has modified a doctrine taken from C. S. Peirce. He has then used it in place of Whitehead's concept of God's eternal envisagement of the total sphere of unchanging specific possibilities. Hartshorne's novel concept is, of course, God's endless contemplation of divine love, the absolutely primordial factor which is the "possibility of possibility," i.e., the source of the evolving continuum of possibility, and hence of actuality as well.

Hartshorne's doctrine of the divine love as the primordial source of all things gives us a clue, I believe, to what he considers to be the absolute, indpendent aspect of God. But to settle the matter is not easy, for Professor Hartshorne seems to have many answers to the question posed. For example, he speaks of the absolute side of God's nature in terms of the divine knowledge--"the generic abstract property of being-all-knowing."[62] Elsewhere Hartshorne says God's goodness is his absoluteness:

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[60] _Ibid_.

[61] _Ibid_.

> The partial independence of a good man's goodness (the abstract quality, "being good" as such) with respect to varying relationships may, then, be taken as the "weak" analogue of the absolute independence of the divine goodness as such with respect to all contingencies. Thus God will be good no more and no less if this happens than if that happens instead.[63]

On the same page God's wisdom is treated in a like manner. A few pages later the divine being "in the sense which abstracts from all particular determinations" is the absolute property of God.[64] At an earlier time Hartshorne wrote of God's existence as the absolute character of the divine nature.[65]

In order to make sense of these statements and others, we must see that each is true, but not the whole truth. God's absolute aspect, in Hartshorne's view, is the divine character which persists throughout his successive states. Love, goodness, wisdom, omniscience, existence, being, and others are attributes constituting God's character. This character will belong to God in each of his relations to the world. Thus, whatever objects may constitute the world, God will be or exist, and he will be supremely good in his relationship to them, loving and wise in his action toward them, aware of them, etc.

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[62] Hartshorne, Divine Relativity, p. 11; cf. p. 21.

[63] Ibid., p. 75

[64] Ibid., pp. 87f.

[65] Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God and the Logic of Theism (Chicago: Willett, Clark & Co., 1941), p. 107.

Now, according to Hartshorne, the "abstract is what can be abstracted, detached in thought . . . from various relationships or contexts. . . ." The fact that God will be existing, omniscient, loving, etc. can be affirmed without knowing anything about the world at a particular moment (except that there will be some kind of world). Hence the fact that God is loving, wise, etc. constitutes his absolute nature. Or better, the absolute aspect of God is the fact of his character, the fact that it is what it is, which includes the attributes mentioned.

The meaning of Hartshorne's doctrine of the absolute aspect of God may be further clarified by comparison with Whitehead. In Whitehead's theology, God's primordial nature involved two elements--first, the objects of God's envisagement, i.e., for Whitehead, eternal objects, and second, God's "subjective form of feeling" these objects, i.e., God's valuation. Both of these elements were unchanging. In Hartshorne's system, the primordial aspect of God also involves two elements, but only one is without change. God's character is constant. The divine character, however, is not related to an eternal, unchanging order of possibility; instead it is externally related to a changing realm of actuality. Hence, whereas in Whitehead, the absolute nature of God included both God's character and a changeless set of objects, in Hartshorne the changeless objects are eliminated and the absolute side of God is simply the fact of his character.[66]

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[66] In conversation, I understood Professor Hartshorne to say that there might be some validity to Whitehead's view that possibility does not evolve, but is instead eternal. Yet Hartshorne continued to hold that possibility is only sensibly conceived as a continuum, not as a collection of discrete entities. When it was suggested that the realm of possibility might be considered as an _eternal_ _continuum_, Hartshorne replied, I believe, that he had not considered the idea before, but that it might have considerable merit.

The advantage of the suggested view, one might maintain, is that Hartshorne could move beyond the rather contentless notion that what is durable in God is the bare facticity of his character; he could adopt the more Whiteheadian view that what is unchanging in the divine nature is God's eternal valuation of the _continuum_ of eternal possibility.

CHAPTER VII

PLATONIC WHITEHEADIAN THEOLOGY

A curious fact of past interpretations of Whitehead is the persistence with which his doctrine of God has been misunderstood. This misunderstanding has been partly due to the fact that Whitehead's view of God progressed, or at least changed (depending on one's point of view), with each new publication. Yet Whitehead never did espouse one view which is occasionally attributed to him. This is the view that God is an eternal object, or the entire realm of eternal objects.

Now, as a matter of fact, some statements made by Whitehead, particularly before Process and Reality, can indeed be thought to suggest this view if--and only if-- the original context is ignored. He wrote, for example:

> Religion is the vision of something which stands beyond, behind, and within, the passing flux of immediate things; something which is real, and yet waiting to be realized; something which is a remote possibility, and yet the greatest of all present facts; something that gives meaning to all that passes, and yet eludes apprehension; something whose possession is the final good, and yet is beyond all reach; something which is the ultimate ideal, and the hopeless quest.[1]

Virtually nothing is said here about the object of religious vision that could not be said, quite literally, about at least some eternal objects.

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[1] SMW 275 (191).

Even in Whitehead's next work, Religion in the Making, where God is spoken of for the first time as an entity[2] having personal characteristics,[3] there remain phrases and sentences which lend credence to a misinterpretation of Whitehead. Here Whitehead notes the absence of a concensus supporting "the notion of a direct vision of a personal God."[4] He may then be understood to imply that a rationalized outlook must rest content with a mere "rightness in things, partially conformed to and partially disregarded."[5] Later Whitehead speaks of the kingdom of heaven which is good, and *is* God,[6] and he says this kingdom is prior to and transcends the temporal process which is evil.[7] Finally, in language remeniscent of that "something which is the ultimate ideal," Whitehead calls God the "completed ideal harmony."[8]

Then in his Ingersoll lecture of 1941, Whitehead, in a markedly platonic fashion, goes so far as to identify value with the realm of possibility.[9] This, on the surface, is hardly consistent with statements in preceding works that "value is inherent in actuality itself,"[10] to say nothing of his view in Process and Reality, but the identification is there nonetheless.

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[2] RM 90 (88), 98 (95).

[3] RM 100 (97), 104 (100), 153 (147), 154 (147f.), 158-60 (151-54).

[4] RM 66 (64). [5] RM 66 (65). [6] RM 154f. (148f.).

[7] RM 87f. (85). [8] RM 119f. (115). [9] IMM 695f.

[10] RM 100 (97); cf. SMW 136 (95).

Statements like these would surely seem confirming evidence to one who merely scans Whitehead having already classified him as some sort of a platonist. Apart from their contexts, these statements bear more than a hint of the deification of a realm of forms, or of particular forms such as "rightness," "harmony," or "goodness," transcending the world, vaguely reflecting themselves upon it, and without which temporality would be but "a mass of pain and misery, a bagatelle of transient experience."[11]

There is, however, another impetus to this particular misreading of Whitehead's doctrine of God, or so it seems to me. It is the astonishing ease with which a kind of platonic doctrine[12] can be made to fit into Whitehead's system of thought, _if_ we make one important modification of that system--we must "platonize" Whitehead by eliminating his ontological principle.

The result of removing the ontological principle from Whitehead's philosophy will be the exact reverse of the change introduced into his philosophy when Whitehead followed Aristotle in accepting that principle. Prior to _Process and Reality_, where the ontological principle became explicit and adherence to it unwavering, reality was divided into possibility and actuality, or forms and process. The former participated in the latter much in the way that Plato's Forms participated in the material world. Granted, Whitehead introduced the idea of a principle of the concretion of forms, but it is not clear that this principle was consistently thought to cause or to influence the mode of the ingression of possibility; it sometimes seems only to be a description of the fact that possibility is expressed so as to constitute order in the temporal process. At any rate, there can be no doubt that the mode of the concretion of eternal objects is attributed to no actuality. Hence, before the ontological principle was invoked, Whitehead affirmed only the juxtaposition of metaphysical equals, possibility and actuality, and the principle of their interaction, the principle of concretion.

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[11] SMW 275 (192).

[12] Obviously I am not speaking here of Plato's own view of God.

When Whitehead accepted the principle that only actualities are causes, he was obliged immediately to introduce his concept of God as an actual entity, responsible for the ingression into the temporal process of "Forms" which could not be credited to temporal actual entities themselves. Although the resultant idea of God is that of a unique actual entity, he is an actual entity nonetheless. The upshot of Whitehead's move is to make actuality primary and potentiality dependent upon actuality for its reality.

Having viewed the effect of the ontological principle, we may now ask why anyone would want to reject it. There are, it seems to me, two possible reasons. In the first place, one may reject the ontological principle because it seems to compremize unduly the independent, if not superior, reality of transcendent possibilities.[13] Redness, according to some, seems to have a reality of its own, dependent neither on red things nor on the mind of God. Even if there be a God, from this point of view the abstract color redness would stand in the same relation to him as to any other actual entity. Or goodness, to take another example, appears to have a power that is independent. We do not ordinarily think that the appeal of "the good" depends upon the fact that "goodness" is located somewhere in particular, namely in the mind of God. And if one rejects the idea of God, the ambiguous value of the temporal flux makes it seem crude at best to suggest that those ultimate values claiming man's highest aspirations should depend for their reality upon the very sphere they transcend so sharply.

One might reject the ontological principle, in the second place, because it results in a form of personalistic theism, i.e., the concept of a supreme actual entity embracing the total realm of possibility. There are, I think, good reasons for not being too quick to condemn this rejection as an arbitrary one. The metaphysical picture resulting from this rejection of theism is one of two independently real orders--a realm of eternal objects transcending actuality and being exemplified in the order of temporal actual entities. Whitehead, of course, urges that such a dualism poses a dilemma demanding further rationalization. He believes that we are obliged to try to understand, first, how it is that possibility is made relevant to actuality at all, secondly, how possibility receives ordered ingression into actuality, and finally, to determine which of the two is more fundamental. Nevertheless, Whitehead does not claim that taking this additional step will eliminate all mystery, in the sense of making every facet of the system capable of rational explanation. All systems of thought, he admits, rest upon basic intuitions behind which rationlization cannot go. In Whitehead's system, for example, many aspects of the relation of eternal objects to actual entities are explained by the fact that the former are purposefully embraced by God who is an actual entity. But we are given no reason for the fact that God does envision possibility, nor for the fact that he does so with a preference producing one order rather than another.

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[13] This, of course, was Plato's view, and apparently it is shared by modern metaphysicians of similar mind, such as Paul Weiss. See Ellen S. Haring, "The Ontological Principle," The Review of Metaphysics (September, 1962), p. 13.

That which usually prompts men to prefer the single inexplicable mystery of God's reality to, say, the double mystery of actuality and possibility is the general assumption that simplicity of explanation is to be preferred. One unanswered question, in other words, is better than two or more. But this is an assumption of logical inquiry, not a result. Its validity is surely not universally self-evident. This means that even in the context of Whitehead's philosophical system one may choose to accept as being inexplicable the ordered relation of possibility and actuality, in spite of the fact that Whitehead himself seeks to overcome this dual mystery through his doctrine of God. Indeed, one may feel in a sense coerced to accept this alternative because it appears to him to be more consonant with his own personal experience.

Whatever the reasons for doing so, the rejection of the ontological principle entails a radical alteration of the later Whitehead's vision of reality. It ushers in a position which, while conceivably maintaining Whitehead's conception of the mechanics of process, extracts possibility from actuality and juxtaposes the two as equal and independent realities. In this manner it offers a sphere of theological options hitherto unavailable, for now one can find in the realm of the possible that which is of sufficient importance to merit man's ultimate concern. Systematically, the options seem to be three in number. God could be conceived as: (1) the totality of possibilities; (2) a complex eternal object, or (3) a single eternal object.

The first option, that God is the totality of possibility, must not be mistaken for the rather different position that God is the possibility of there being anything at all, actual or possible. In the latter, to be discussed somewhat in the next chapter, God might be termed the "possibility of possibility" and therefore would not be one of the eternal objects as such. In the first, God is the sum total of all eternal objects.

Hence God would include the possibility of goodness, truth, and beauty. Unfortunately, however, God would also include the possibility of red, triangles, and four, as well as mud, teeth, and evil. There are surely many criteria for determining what is worthy of being called deity, but it is doubtful that this view would meet any of them.

The second option within this general alternative has the freedom to exclude possibilities deemed inappropriate to deity, thus making itself more desirable. Let us suppose, for example, that deity is thought to be the possibility of aesthetic harmony, or human mutuality, or pleasure, or something else. Then that set of possibilities (i.e., a complex eternal object) which, if actualized, would be productive of whatever we suppose God ought to make possible would be called God. Taking a specific example, if the possibility of mutuality were called God, then that eternal object would presumably be a complex one, constituted in part by the less complex or even simple possibilities of (what in human experience is called) feeling, understanding, sharing, etc.

There is an important distinction between the view that God is a complex eternal object and the third possible view, that God is a simple eternal object. In principle, a complex possibility may be analyzed in terms of its parts. In that sense it is definable. Hence, one may seek to determine what it is that constitutes mutuality, pleasure, harmony, or whatever else it is of which God is thought to be the possibility. One's conclusions in this regard then will enable him to arrive at the simpler possibilities which would comprize the complex eternal object, God. Thus, with the second option, a discussion of the nature of God is at least possible. This is not so with the third option. Simple possibilities, of which God is one, are what they are; they cannot be broken into parts analytically. This makes God indefinable. With the exception of this difference, however, all that will be said about God viewed as a simple eternal object will be applicable to God viewed as a complex possibility.

In discussing the third option within the framework of "Platonic Whiteheadian Theology" I propose to take a somewhat different approach. As far as I know, no one has developed this position for us and argued for its religious relevance. Therefore we must ask ourselves what sort of statement might be given by way of explanation and in favor of the adoption of the view that God is an eternal object? I shall attempt such a statement and even suggest a particular eternal object which seems to be most useful in the construction of this alternative.

Whitehead contends that any valid metaphysical theory must at least be one which begins in ordinary experience. Among the multitude of abstract categories by which ordinary experience may be analyzed is one which we shall call "goodness." There are, in other words, moments of experience which we call good or speak of as manifesting the quality of goodness. In Whitehead's system of thought, something about which one can say, "Look, there it is again" is called an eternal object. Goodness is just such an entity. It, like colors, qualities, mathematical forms, etc. appears repeatedly; it is exemplified in a variety of occasions of experience.

According to Whitehead, simple eternal objects (that is, those which are not combinations of possibilities) are ultimates. They are not composed of parts nor can they be broken down into qualifying characteristics. They are the ultimates which qualify everything else but themselves are not qualified.

Although it is not necessary, it is possible within a Whiteheadian framework to interpret the possibility of goodness as a simple eternal object. This seems to be what Whitehead himself held when he spoke of "The Good" as "an ultimate qualification not to be analyzed in terms of any things more final than itself."[14] One could argue otherwise, of course; one might think goodness to be a certain mixture of pleasure, mutuality, fulfillment or something else. But this is not self-evident, and since it is difficult to say that any such combination is always good, the inclination to view the good as an indefinable ultimate has always had its appeal. From this perspective there is only one unequivocal thing to be said about goodness: it is itself. There are many good things. But from a Whiteheadian point of view, these are merely actual entities or societies of such entities which exemplify the simple eternal object, "goodness."[15]

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[14] AI 190 (152). In this passage, "The Good" appears to be synonomous with value in general, subsuming moral and aesthetic values. A. H. Johnson argues that in fact this is Whitehead's basic position, in spite of some statements in Whitehead to the contrary. (See Johnson, p. 170.) Be that as it may, this view would seem to be the one most amenable to the position being outlined in this chapter.

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[15] That there are certain affinities between this position and the ethical theory of G. E. Moore is obvious. Moore writes that "good" is a notion which is "simple, unanalyzable, indefinable." (G. E. Moore, Principia Ethica (London: Cambridge University Press, 1959), p. 37.) In this respect, he says, it is like the notion of "yellow." (*Ibid*., p. 6.) The good "has no parts. It is one of those innumerable objects of thought which are . . . the ultimate terms by reference to which whatever *is* capable of definition must be defined." (*Ibid*., p. 10.) The view that there are "innumerable" fundamental notions and that "good" is one of these is fully acceptable to the point of view being outlined in this chapter.

There is an all-important difference, however, in the fact that the present view is self-consciously metaphysical, while Moore's claims not to be. (*Ibid*., pp. 123ff.) Moore argues that because one must intuit the nature of the good, it is incapable of being deduced from a prior knowledge of the nature of reality, the truly real, or (in theology) the will of God. This, it seems to me, is a valid conclusion in so far as it maintains that "good" may be known apart from the aid of metaphysical theories. But it surely does not serve to rule out the possibility of theorizing about the metaphysical status of that simple and (in the Whiteheadian sense specified) indefinable eternal object, the good. This latter concern in itself stands quite apart from other issues, such as how the good is known, whether it is non-natural, whether Moore's definition of definition is unassailable, and whether his ethical theory omits the prescriptive aspects of moral judgments.

The platonic Whiteheadian position here being discussed, then, inadvertently provides a metaphysical context for much that is included in Moore's understanding of the good. In addition, because it agrees with Moore that only the good is "worth having for its own sake," (*Ibid*., p. 37.) and adds that a commitment to the realization of this ultimate is the essence of religion, the present position is capable of using the notion of "good" as the core of a philosophical theology.

It is, on the other hand, clear enough that the metaphysical context here given to the good, as Moore views it, would satisfy Moore as little as Whitehead. The reason, on both counts, is its platonic character. There is, however, one supremely important difference between this platonic understanding of the good and that of Plato in the *Republic*. The latter views the good as the supreme Form or Idea manifested variously in nature and morality. (See 506B ff; 592F.) It is further

When an eternal object is exemplified, according to Whitehead, it is present without change or distortion. Thus whenever goodness is expressed, it appears without being modified. In this sense, there are no degrees of goodness. On the other hand, goodness never appears alone. Each actual entity is the actualization of many possibilities arranged in varying degrees of relevance to its satisfaction. Hence there are certainly degrees in which goodness may be relevant to or determinative of any given synthesis of feelings. Furthermore, when that particular synthesis is objectified, the effectiveness of the eternal object, goodness depends strongly on the subjective aim of the new occasion. What this shows is that, though there are no degrees of goodness, goodness is susceptible to two types of variation--actually, two sides of the same coin. Goodness may be of various degrees of relevance in any synthesis, and goodness may be variously prehended by different occasions from differing perspectives. But it is precisely the same goodness which finds infinitely varied modes of expression and reception in the temporal process.

Now if one does not find the idea of a supreme actual entity to be a personally meaningful expression of the nature

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implied that there is something intrinsically valuable in the knowledge of the good. (509C.) From the Whiteheadian point of view, too, knowledge is one type of the actualization of the good, and the intuition or prehension of the good would sometimes be held to be of intrinsic worth, as in aesthetic experience. But more often, and contrary to some tendencies in Platonic thought, knowledge of the good would be but a means to the realization of some higher end, the actualization of some "good result."

of God, and if one holds to the idea of the independent reality of possibility, it is systematically possible in Whitehead's philosophy for him to speak of God as a specific eternal object. I am suggesting that if one takes this position, goodness might well be affirmed as that simple possibility which is the object of man's religious vision. Metaphysically, God as goodness would not be superior to any other eternal object. But existentially, to those for whom "seeking the good" is paramount, goodness would be supreme. Whitehead's system does not make this kind of commitment necessary; it does make it possible.

There are even certain respects in which this platonic option parallels Whitehead's own theology. One example is the manner in which God as goodness may be said to order or value eternal objects, as does Whitehead's God. The realm of possibility includes both simple and complex eternal objects, the latter being possible combinations of possibilities. Now at least those complex possibilities in which goodness is a factor and is more highly relevant could be said to be more highly valued than those in which goodness is absent altogether or is negligibly present, assuming the equivalence of value and goodness. But since Whitehead's forms, unlike Plato's are not all perfect, it seems quite impossible to continue the Whiteheadian doctrine that all possibilities are ordered. That is, goodness would presumably not be a factor in other simple possibilities nor in every other complex eternal object. At most, then, goodness could only be said to "order" those possibilities in which it is a constituent, eg. possibilities having to do with values. God conceived as goodness would therefore order only some eternal objects. It is also possible for the platonic Whiteheadian to continue Whitehead's doctrine of God's two natures. God as absolute would be the eternal object goodness in abstraction from every actual relationship, apart from its every expression in the temporal world. God as relative would be goodness as it finds ingression in temporal actual entities--God temporally "revealed."[16] In this view, then, God as primordial and absolute is real but not actual. God as consequent (though not in Whitehead's sense of the term) and relative is both real and actual.

The systematic possibility of identifying God and goodness, using a semi-Whiteheadian metaphysical scheme, and the vague parallels between such a doctrine and Whitehead's own are not nearly so important as the existential possibility of this view of God. For many, of course, this possibility does not exist and any discussion of the theory will remain interesting intellectual gymnastics at best. I think this is as it should be. There are others, nevertheless, who find the concept of God as an actual entity with a more or less personal nature to be equally impossible. I am only arguing that, in spite of its not being a currently espoused doctrine, there is some basis for finding in the concept of the good the divinity others attribute only to a personal entity. In short, this is a living option in Whiteheadian theology and not only an interesting theoretical alternative.

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[16] Whitehead's reference to "ideals of the Good . . . which stretch beyond any immediate realization" (IMM 673) is recognition of the dual nature of goodness.

One reason for admitting a possible meaningfulness in this approach is that it seems to be a genuine if uncommon expression of prevalent religious feelings. That is, the view that God _is_ goodness can be seen as one way of confessing and extending the common intuition that goodness is essential to the divine nature. Some have found it possible to conceive of a God whose power is significantly restricted, or whose status as first principle is dubious, or whose freedom is limited, but those who have found worthy of worship a God whose goodness is suspect are few indeed. Usually such an affirmation is either a disguise for asserting that God's ways are not man's and hence his goodness conflicts with out own, or for the judgment that finally God, conceived in any intelligible sense whatsoever, is dead. If, then, goodness is an essential characteristic of deity as man has usually envisioned him, we should not be astonished that one who would settle upon the realm of the abstract for a concept of God should find goodness alone to be "religiously available" to the full. What other eternal objects could consistently evoke adoration and effort? It is not surprizing, Whitehead once observed, that a God conceived primarily as First Principle should so often be worshipped in churches that are white-washed. One might say the same of power, or ultimate ground, or being-itself, or even personality.

It is only essential, one with this view will insist, that God be good.

It is hardly debateable that the dominant religious tradition in the West has approved and reinforced, if not having first inspired, this intuition. The ethical monotheism of the Hebrews is as suggestive of the deification of goodness as was the Platonic conviction: "there is nothing which men love but the good." But the New Testament affirmation that God is love is even more explicitly in keeping with this line of thought, however much it might be said to transcend it. For, from the first reflections of suffering believers to the modern struggle with the problem of theodicy the making and buttressing of an affirmation of God's goodness has been thoroughly Christian. The platonic Whiteheadian whose religious vision is inspired by this tradition quite probably will judge the doctrine that God is goodness to be but a "secular" statement of the scripture's proclamation that God is love. And because he speaks from a Christian point of view, he would necessarily confess that for him at least, the revelation that God is love or goodness came through Jesus of Nazareth. He is unlikely to say that his own intellectual response to these events is anything like orthodox. But well may he claim that this life and death is in fact the historical source of his fundamental religious vision, and that the language of a platonic Whiteheadian theology is but the most adequate vehicle of its expression for him.

CHAPTER VIII

EMPIRICAL WHITEHEADIAN THEOLOGY

Empirical Whiteheadian theologies may be, and indeed have been, developed out of the wedding of certain elements of a Whiteheadian vision of reality with a non-Whiteheadian view of the task of philosophy. In such instances, Whitehead's doctrine of reality as a flux of occasions of experience is accepted while the proper role of philosophy is held to be more purely descriptive than Whitehead had believed.

The word "empirical" is generally used to express this non-speculative mood, even when it is not intended to discredit all speculation. Empirical is usually meant to refer to that type of thinking which assumes that what we can be said to know with fair reliability is derived solely or primarily from experience or some part of experience. By experience I refer to human awareness and the totality of that which is given to it.

In terms of theological thought, empiricism means that, ideally, inference is to be avoided in arriving at a doctrine of God. The task of theology is to point to that given directly in our experience which does or should elicit from us complete devotion.

When it turns to Whiteheadian theology, the empirical spirit is certain to reject the idea of transcendent, eternal possibilities (such as the platonic position affirms) since there is not the slightest chance that a temporal being could experience anything as being eternal. Nor could there be any experience of that which is strictly transcendent. The transcendent, at most, would be but a characteristic of the immanent. Nothing "above," "beyond," or "grounding" the temporal process would be considered of importance, religiously or otherwise. Also likely to be denied is the doctrine of a supreme actual entity (Whitehead and Cobb) or a cosmic individual (Hartshorne), unless of course one believes himself to have experienced a cosmic entity or individual as such, which is doubtful.

On the basis of introspection and perhaps appealing to the new physics, the metaphysical picture of the empirical Whiteheadian will probably consist of internally related, momentary units of experience or energy and the temporal possibilities which they exemplify. On the basis of common sense, it may follow Whitehead's epistemology, claiming that our experience includes objects as related to ourselves, the prehending subjects, and thus denying the Humean doctrine that we only know unrelated qualities. On the basis of the experience of personal volition and the givenness of goals, the Whiteheadian empiricist might allow the philosopher's doctrine of an ideal goal or initial aim being inherent in some or all atomic occasions. Much else of Whitehead's admitted speculation regarding the concrescence of an occasion of experience may be ignored as being unknowable and hence virtually irrelevant.

Because both actual entities and temporal possibilities are in process, according to the view of reality under discussion, process will become the fundamental philosophical category, the category descriptive of all reality. The specific result for theology will be that God is to be understood as the observable process or as some aspect of that process.

The terminus of this brief analysis, i.e., the concept of creativity, is broadly analogous to what in fact became the crucial concept in the work done by some process theologians and philosophers during the last three or four decades, i.e., the concept of creativity. In this sense, we have concrete historical examples of the possibilities to which we are systematically pointing. We ought to be aware of the background of this development, before turning to the positions themselves.

It should be said that it was in the theology of Henry Nelson Wieman, not in Whitehead's, that most of the "empirical Whiteheadians" found the key to their own theological developments. B. E. Meland describes the theological situation after World War I, and the role that Wieman played in opening a new path to theological thinking:[1] The context of the discussion of the period, he says, was provided by the appearance of a new philosophical perspective and vocabulary--a view of the world from the viewpoint of biological evolution discussed in terms of "emergence," "process," "creativity," "holism," etc. The crucial theological issue of the day was the fundamental question: Does God exist? To the answers of "no" or "only conceptually," the assertion of Wieman provided a forceful and clear alternative. Wieman found the basis of his alternative in the midst of the very scientific context which others thought forced the dissolution of theology. God, said Wieman, is that creative object of scientific inquiry "upon which human life is most dependent for its security, welfare, and increasing abundance."[2]

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[1] B. E. Meland, "The Root and Form of Wieman's Thought," in Robert W. Bretall, ed., The Empirical Theology of Henry Nelson Wieman ("The Library of Living Theology," Vol. IV; New York: Macmillan, 1963), pp. 45-53.

The curious thing about Wieman's achievement is that he managed to combat a theological skepticism derived from Humean phenomenalism precisely by being a phenomenalist himself. He accepted the restrictions of a severe empiricism without reservation. ". . . to speak of what is not accessible to human life in any way," he says, "is to speak nonsense."[3] In answering the question; what is accessible? Wieman is consistently Humean; all that is accessible to human experience is "a quality or a complex of qualities."[4] Examples given are "hard, soft, bright, red, odorous, painful, miserable, joyous, sorrowful."[5]

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[2] H. N. Wieman, *Religious Experience and Scientific Method* (New York: Macmillan, 1926), p. 170.

[3] H. N. Wieman, *The Source of Human Good* (Chicago: (University of Chicago Press, 1946), p. 299.

[4] *Ibid*., p. 301.

[5] *Ibid*., p. 302.

Now since "what we experience is ultimate reality,"[6] "quality . . . is the ultimate substance of the world out of which all else is made."[7]

One of the most fundamental facts of experience is change or process.[8] What is it, then, which changes? The answer, of course, is "quality; not only sense qualities."[9] While true as far as it goes, this analysis is not wholly adequate. After all, order and persistence also are parts of our experience. Wieman accounts for such apprehensions by "a law or order to which the process of change conforms."[10] These ordered processes of qualities are called structures[11] or strands.[12] Qualities changing according to one structure produce a table, according to another a chemical, to another a human life, to another a mind, to another love, to another the universe, etc. Those structures, however, are abstractions. Qualities are the concrete realities, which may be abstracted into a variety of structures or strands.

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[6] Ibid., p. 304. This is not to say that ultimate reality is as we experience it, for error is the plainest of possibilities. Wieman means rather to say that we experience only what is there to be experienced. Whether it is experienced erroneously or not is another question.

[7] Ibid., p. 302.

[8] H. N. Wieman, Man's Ultimate Commitment (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1958), pp. 78ff.

[9] Ibid., pp. 82f. [10] Ibid., p. 79. [11] Ibid.

[12] H. N. Wieman, The Directive in History (Boston: Beacon Press, 1949), pp. 7f.

The conjunction of any of the variety of structured qualities with that type of structure known as perceving or feeling is called an event.[13] Events are not isolated from one another. Through memory they are "connected with innumerable (other) events ---tragic and comic, bitter and sweet -- that have happened through the years."[14] Through anticipation they convey the qualities of other events emerging in the future.[15] Thus events are bound to one another by the quality called "meaning" -- Wieman calls it "qualitative meaning."[16] He writes: "Qualitative meaning is any structure of interrelated events, together with their possibilities, when these events have appreciable qualities and when the structure as a whole can be represented by signs."[17]

Qualitative meaning is intrinsically good.[18] In qualitative meaning are woven together the diverse qualities of the world, making these qualities more appreciable by vivifying their richness and depth through the illumination of their harmony and contrast.[19] Yet qualitative meaning is but a created good.[20] Therefore, when man foolishly fails to seek the creator of the created good, falsely valuing it for its own sake, qualitative meaning becomes demonic.[21]

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[13] Ibid. [14] Wieman, Source of Human Good, p. 18.

[15] Ibid. [16] Ibid., pp. 18f.

[17] Ibid., p. 21. The passage continues: "Signs are those events belonging to the structure which serve to represent the structure as a whole."

[18] Ibid., p. 19. [19] Ibid., pp. 20, 304. [20] Ibid., p.17.

[21] Ibid., pp. 23ff. Cf. Wieman's "Reply to Pepper," in

The creative event is the source of created good.[22] It is a process of reorganization generating "new meanings."[23] Wieman has discerned for us five aspects of the creative event as it functions in human experience: (1) An individual's ability to know, control and appreciate is enhanced. (2) One's appreciative understanding of himself and of others as persons is increased. (3) All that the individual has come to grasp appreciatively is progressively integrated. (4) One's ability creatively to meet suffering, failure and death increases. (5) Individual freedom is increased.[24]

The work of the creative event transcends the efforts of man. It is a gift of grace. Man can prepare the way for the creative event, but it can never be produced or controlled by human effort.[25]

While qualitative meaning exists only at the human level, the creative event works at all levels of reality,[26] and at all times.[27] Hence there is only one eternal structure; it is the structure of the creative event running through all levels of creation.[28] Wieman calls that structure "creativity."

Bretall, ed., Theology of Wieman, p. 159.

[22] Wieman, Source of Human Good, p. 20.

[23] Ibid., p. 56.

[24] H. N. Wieman, Intellectual Foundations of Faith (New York: Philosophical Library, 1961), pp. 61-62, 125-26.

[25] Wieman, Source of Human Good, p. 74.

[26] Ibid., pp. 72, 195. [27] Ibid., pp. 191ff.

[28] Ibid., pp. 191, 193.

Creativity is an abstraction.

> Creativity and the creative event are inseparable, but the two words carry an important distinction in meaning. Creativity is the character, the structure, or form which the event must have to be creative. Creativity is therefore an abstraction. The concrete reality is the creative event. Every event is inexhaustible to human inquiry. We can never learn all that enters into an event, but we can know some aspects of its character. In the case of the creative event, this knowable aspect is its creativity.[29]

By way of comparison, Whitehead speaks of creativity as a characteristic of all actual occasions. Each occasion is creative because it constitutes a fraction of the sheer ongoingness of the universe. In short, for Whitehead creativity is mere progression, ongoingness or dynamism. Wieman's concept of creativity is more restricted, in a sense. For Wieman, creativity is a particular kind of progression; it is that ongoingness which results in the increase of value.

Whitehead and Wieman differ not only in their understandings of creativity, but also in the place which creativity occupies in their respective systems. For Wieman, creativity, or more accurately, an instance of creativity, does something, it has agency. Whitehead, on the other hand, relegates creativity to the place of an abstraction and, in keeping with his ontological principle, denies it activity or agency. For Whitehead, creativity does nothing; it is a characteristic of the activity of actual entities.

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[29] Ibid., p. 299.

These differences are subtle perhaps, but important. Yet they were not easily noticed, even by Wieman. One reason was the fact that Whitehead did not always say what he meant. In _Process_ _and_ _Reality_, for example, he writes: "creativity achieves its supreme task of transforming disjoined multiplicity . . . into concrescent unity . . . ."[30] Similar instances are numerous.[31] In all of them, the differences between Whitehead's creativity and Wieman's creative event are very far from being made clear.[32]

Besides the understandable misreading of Whitehead along the lines of Wieman's thought, a second reason for the fact that some followers of Wieman found an ally in Whitehead is the obvious fact that creativity is central to Whitehead's thinking. Wieman himself observes that

> Whitehead does not apply the term _God_ to the creativity which operates in human life. He reserves the holy name for designating the primordial order which is changeless Being. But analysis of his thought seems to indicate that the primordial order can be called God only because the process which creates us and all the good which human life can ever attain does, in truth, conform to the primoridal order. In such case, the primordial order is God only because it renders the process of existence progressively creative, when required conditions are present. The primordial order is an ingredient in the creativity, in such manner that without the primordial order there would be no creativity.
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> Whether or not this statement about Whitehead's thought is what Whitehead himself intended to say, this is the line of thinking I developed in consequence of long study of his writing.[33]

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[30] PR 528. [31] Eg., PR 30, 47, 130, 134, 135, 344.

[32] Whitehead later became aware of the ambiguity, even inaccuracy of many of his statements on creativity. See Johnson, _Whitehead's_ _Theory_ _of_ _Reality_, p. 170.

[33] Bretall, ed., _Theology_ _of_ _Wieman_, p. 9.

Wieman is not entirely correct about the meaning of the term 'God' in Whitehead's system, but his judgment as to the centrality of creativity in Whitehead's view of the world is well-taken. Whitehead accurately represents himself when he writes: "Neither God nor the World, reaches static completion. Both are in the grip of the ultimate metaphysical ground, the creative advance into novelty." Though shorn of the agency it occupied in the thought of the early Whitehead, creativity remained central to Whitehead's understanding of reality.

There were those who learned from Wieman to speak of God in the language of process, creativity and emergence, but who did not share Wieman's phenomenalistic ontology. It was understandable then that they should at least consider the possibility of translating Wieman's concern into the equally dynamic, but seemingly more adequate, process metaphysic of Whitehead. But how could this be accomplished? Well, as a matter of fact, the alternatives are really rather clear. Any element of process, alone relevant to the concern of the empirically-oriented students of Whitehead, which might possibly be an object of religious devotion must be one of the following: (a) all actual entities, (b) many actual entities, or (c) one actual entity; or, (d) some particular actual or possible aspect of all actual entities, (e) many actual entities, or (f) one actual entity.

Option (a), because it is too broad, runs headlong into the problem of evil and is therefore unacceptable. One would need to be unimaginably insensitive to the waste, futility and evil involved in the totality of actual occasions to find in them a god to worship. Options (c) and (f) can be dismissed as being too narrow. What single passing, momentary actual occasions of experience, past, present or future, or what actual or possible aspect of only one actual entity could conceivably constitute the being of that which is in fact the perennial object of religious devotion?

Positions (b), (d) and (e) seem more reasonable because, in different ways, they offer one the opportunity to be somewhat selective in determining that to which we refer in speaking of God. God would be a very select group of actual entities, in option (b). In (d) God would be a select aspect of all actual occasions. According to (e), God would be a particular aspect of a particular group of temporal events.

God as a Group of Actual Entities

To my knowledge, no Whiteheadian has worked out option (b). This may at first seem strange, for in some ways this option seems more like the position of Wieman than any other option available in Whitehead's philosophy. Wieman says that God is fully concrete. For Whitehead, only actual entities meet that requirement. Therefore, it would seem that what Wieman calls God must necessarily become a group of actual entities.

The principle for selecting which actual entities belong in the divine nature may be taken from Wieman's own work. Wieman writes that God is any concrete event in which qualities "become more appreciable. . . ."[34]

However, an actual entity is a complex of feelings, not of qualities. Hence, developing option (b) in terms of Wieman's view of creativity as the increase of value, God is any actual occasion in which synthesized feelings "become more appreciable [than in immediately prior occasions] as they are connected with one another by way of meaning and are so related as to vivify one another by contrast."[35]

Wieman speaks of God as producing "qualitative meaning." By this he suggests that structures of qualities become meaning-laden. In Whiteheadian terms one would have to speak of meaning being attached to syntheses of feelings. Hence, "qualitative meaning" might now best be called "meaningful feeling." God then is an actual entity in which "meaningful feeling" is created. Thus God is a particular kind of actual occasion.

A certain peculiarity arises in the statement of option (b) which Wieman is able to avoid. Every actual occasion in which meaningful feeling is achieved is deity. But it seems fairly clear that there are varying degrees of "appreciability" or "meaningfulness." In some occasions meaningful feeling is very intense; in others it is practically negligible. By the only definition available to option (b), an occasion in which barely the slightest appreciable synthesis of feeling occurs is deity, just as is one in which meaningful feeling reaches unusual heights. The alternative, to attempt some recognition of this variation by speaking of degrees of "Godliness", seems to mitigate the problem little if any at all. Wieman is able to avoid this peculiarity because he can maintain a distinction between the source (i.e., the creative event) which is constant, and the result (i.e., qualitative meaning) which is achieved in various degrees. For him, the created good varies, but the creative good is unchanging. In Whitehead's system, by contrast, an actual entity is ultimately self-caused. Hence there can be no final separation of the creating and created good. So the peculiarity remains, and really makes an adequate translation of Wieman into Whitehead impossible!

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[34] Wieman, Source of Human Good, p. 304.

[35] Ibid.

But a second difficulty arises in option (b) which is equally present in Wieman's own doctrine, or so it seems to me. If, in the Whiteheadian version, totally distinct events or actual entities are properly called God, how can we avoid saying that there are many gods? It is true that these events are all related in that they all exemplify a particular possibility in varying degrees of relevance to its satisfaction. But this is quite immaterial, for God is concrete, and the concrete reality is each actual occasion, not the possibility they share. Wieman, I believe, can avoid speaking of many gods only be being imprecise. That is, he sometimes speaks as if God is creativity or the creative process, both of which are in some sense unitary. When he is careful, however, Wieman admits that creativity is merely an abstraction and that the concrete reality is the event which is creative.[36] Since there are many events it is hard to see, with Wieman's view or the Whiteheadian one, how the conclusion that there are many gods can be avoided.

God as an Aspect of All Actual Entities

Option (d) is the position that God is some character or possibility exemplified by all actual occasions. Since this view does not involve the contention that God is fully concrete, it is not subject to the polytheistic results to which both Wieman and option (b) seem to me to be inclined. That is, God, from this point of view, is clearly unitary in the sense of being a single element shared by all occasions of experience. Moreover, since it, unlike option (b) (but like Wieman), is able to distinguish that which may exemplify God in differing degrees from that which is exemplified variously but itself does not vary, option (d) is not forced to speak of entities exhibiting degrees of "Godliness" as being equally God.

It should be evident from the discussion in chapter three that there are many elements shared by all actual entities. There are, for example, the variety of feelings constituting all actual entities, the ideal aim they each are given, their phases and satisfaction, as well as the metaphysical ultimates--one, many and creativity[37]--which are abstractions from the many occasions of experience. Perhaps it could be claimed that several of these are objects of religious devotion. One, however, has received the particular attention of theologians. This element has been termed "creativity," but the term is not used as Whitehead meant it. Instead, as we shall see, "creativity" is used to refer to a quality of feeling thought to be constituent of all occasions.

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[36] *Ibid.*, p. 299.

[37] PR 31.

God _as_ _Creativity_ -- Creativity in Whitehead's system is an abstraction from the internal and external process characteristic of each occasion and of the many occasions considered together.[38] Whitehead eliminates any moral or valuational connotation from the use of the term. Creativity, therefore, never held any religious implications for Whitehead because it referred to the sheer ongoingness of things grossly evil as well as good. This, of course, is in contrast to Wieman who uses the term to refer only to that aspect of ongoingness in which value is produced.

Those theologians who have attempted to place a rather Wiemean concept of creativity (as that element of progression in which value is produced)[39] into an empirical Whiteheadian view of reality seem to be fairly clear examples of one development of option (d). For Wieman, creativity may be said to refer to the sensitivity inherent in certain events whereby quality is enhanced and value is produced. The theologians to be discussed follow Wieman in taking "sensitivity" to be the clue to an understanding of creativity. But in a Whiteheadian framework, sensitivity can refer only to the feelings of actual occasions. Therefore, from this point of view, to speak of God as creativity is to speak of God as the element of sensitivity of feeling inherent in every experiential event which makes all things that are good.

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[38] See above, p. 66.

[39] Unless otherwise indicated, "creativity" shall henceforth be understood in this manner.

Professors Bernard Loomer, Daniel Day Williams and Bernard Meland all seem to me to follow variations of this one approach.[40] Professor Meland, however, has written most extensively, and it is to him that we shall turn for an account of option(d) developed in terms of creativity.[41]

In an article in The Journal of Religion,[42] Meland outlines the elements or "notions" of a philosophy of process which he finds to be useful. He writes:

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[40] Perhaps this is less clear of Professor Williams than of the other two. Williams occasionally appears to speak as if God were a reality presupposed by all things making even creativity a possibility. (See Daniel Day Williams, God's Grace and Man's Hope (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949), pp. 51f.) If this is true, Dr. Williams would certainly go farther than the others beyond the bounds of the empirical position outlined above. Even Meland's "mystical Naturalism" seems only to be a recognition of the unknowable depth of meaning produced in immediately given experience rather than an appeal to an inferred metaphysical reality presupposed by the work of creativity at all levels. (See H. N. Wieman and B. E. Meland, American Philosophies of Religion (Chicago: Willet, Clark & Co., 1936), pp. 291-95; Meland, Faith and Culture (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), pp. 209-11, and Seeds of Redemption (New York: Macmillan, 1947), pp. 43, 45, 47, 155.)

[41] It is true that Meland sometimes calls God a "Creative Event." But the event spoken of usually can be interpreted as an instance of creativity itself. Creativity is the more inclusive reality.

[42] B. E. Meland, "Interpreting the Christian Faith within a Philosophical Framework," The Journal of Religion (April, 1953, pp. 87-102.

> The first of these fundamental notions is that events are primary. Just as certain rational systems centered upon Substance as a primary notion, or upon Mind, Person, or Matter, the new metaphysics sees Event as having a primary status. This is a rather negative way of presenting the notion, for it appears that in such a perspective one is reducing everything to bare happenings, to process or behavior. In the sense in which the new empiricism means to employ the term, however, Event is highly compact and rich in meaning. This is because the ideas of immediacy and of concretion, or happening, which are associated with the term "event" carry far greater content of meaning than would be true in philosophies in which "event" is regarded simply as a segregated moment of time. In the perspective of the new empiricism each moment of time is viewed as the creative passage taken as a total datum. What is said of each moment can be said of each emerging event. Event is thus to be taken, both in its elemental sense as the most primary notion, the simplest form of existence beyond which no analysis of experience can go, and in its ultimate sense as being inexhaustible: the bearer of all that is in miniature. . . .
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> The third fundamental notion is the social nature of reality. The fact of sociality derives from God's intent as Creative Event in which individuals are created in community. Creation is a communal event, not only by virtue of a condition of mutuality in structures into which every emergent comes and which exists among all events, but because of the dynamic of the creative thrust which can be characterized as a persistent impulse of love within the power context of process, luring the individual events toward fulfilment in the community of spirit, a structure in process of emergence in which love is dominant and regulative. Thus the social nature of reality applies both to the ground of being and to the goal of emergence in so far as one may speak of a definitive end of existence.
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> A fourth fundamental notion is that relations are dynamic. This notion unites the earlier notions in a way that underlines their interactive character. James spoke of relations as implying not only spatial connections but transitions as well. The transitive element he found to be a neglected factor; yet this element, he observed, is what carries the implication of meaning from this point to that. This was but a way of saying that a static reading of anything, of formal philosophic meanings, of words in a sentence, or of the elements of consciousness in the thought of a person, is a false reading of it -- most certainly an inadequate reading of it.

> The dynamic character of relations presages the idea of emergence, which is the fifth fundamental notion. Relations are thus seen to suggest not simply the notion of pattern but the interaction of structures in a way which makes for a subtle progression from lower to higher organizations of events. A binding factor, which is at the same time a thrust toward the advancing sensitivity of structures, is thus noted as a persisting horizon of mystery and promise attending each actualized order or structure.[43]

While not intended to be technical, Meland's statement is sufficiently precise to indicate the proximity of Whitehead's view of process and Meland's own.

Meland's discussion of another "notion," omitted above, introduces us to his view of God.

> A second fundamental notion is that there is a matrix of sensitivity in which all life is cast and out of which all structured events arise. This primordial source has been spoken of as the "Creative Event" or as the nisus toward deity. I choose to speak of it as a "matrix of sensitivity" in order to designate the quality and character of this creative ground of all existence. It is present in every event in the sense that process is inseparably involved; only it is more than a constituent. Hartshorne has spoken of God as the "Inescapable Companion," meaning to suggest this same attending concern for the quality of spirit implicit in events. God in his concreteness is a sensitive awareness at work in every emerging event which accounts for qualitative attainment in existence: the emergence of you and men, of creatures all about us, of the glories of earth and sea, the emergence of mind and spirit, of cultures in all their complexity, discipline and form. God's concreteness is an act within the process at every instance of creation, turning what would otherwise persist as brute force into events with direction, with capacity for a sensitive response, for selection, for decision; in short for feeling and sensibility in all their range of meaning. This infusion of a tender regard which makes for purpose and meaning is the creative act of God.[44]

The crucial phrase in this passage is "sensitive awareness." It might seem that the phrase does not refer solely to the sensitive awareness of each actual occasion, for Meland goes on to speak of God as that "act" which produces events "with capacity for a sensitive response." But that which produces the sensitivity of present occasions is precisely the sensitive awareness of prior occasions. In turn, the future hinges upon that activity which is the sensitive awareness or creativity of the present actual occasions. Present creative activity, then, both _is the work of God_ in past occasions and _is God_ for future occasions. Hence Meland can call sensitive awareness both "the creative act of God" and "God's concreteness."

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[43] *Ibid*., pp. 91f.

[44] *Ibid*.

The language of action, if employed together with an acceptance of the ontological principle, requires the doctrine of God as a fully actual entity. But if one rejects that principle, he may speak of that which does something as an abstract element characteristic of the way in which actual entities concresce. This, I believe is the only consistent way in which to understand Professor Meland.[45] Thus, elsewhere Meland speaks of God as an activity with a "sensitive character" to be distinguished from "the incessant activity that is sheer dynamism . . . without form or value."[46]

Meland sometimes speaks of God in language other than that of sensitive activity. He says, for example, that God is a nature -- a "Sensitive Nature within Nature."[47] But the emphasis even in these passages is on the "sensitive working" of that nature.[48] That is, God is "the concrete working out of creative and redemptive occurrences as these touch our lives. . . ."[49]

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[45] Meland does deny that God or creativity is an abstraction. (See _Ibid_., pp. 90f.) But by this he only means to deny that God is not immediately given, that he is a reality known only through inference.

[46] Meland, _Seeds of Redemption_, p. 99.

[47] _Ibid_., p. 12; cf. pp. 60, 98.

When speaking of the fact that God, although immediately given, transcends our comprehension, Meland refers to God as a "structure." He writes: ". . . the hiddenness of God refers to the fullness of sensitivity as a transcendent structure of meaning which nevertheless interpenetrates and subsumes every other structure."[50] In Meland's discussions, however, the term "structure," like "nature," is not meant to indicate an actuality concrete in the sense that actual entities are concrete. Any structure of experience, Meland tells us, "is the nurturing context of meanings, feelings, and valuations through which the past is transmitted and emerging events are qualitatively formed."[51] A structure is a manner in which feelings are sensitively organized -- an organization which may be shared by many occasions of experience. God is one such structure.

> God stands to man as one structure of meaning stands to another. . . . The actuality here is, I believe, a matrix of sensitivity and meaning of subtle and vast dimensions, transcending our own, in fact all human structures, which serves as the ultimate ground of our meaning and the source and center of all that we are and of whatever else we might become in the mystery of creation and re-creation.[52]

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[48] See ibid., pp. 60ff., 98.

[49] Meland, Faith and Culture, p. 212.

[50] Ibid., pp. 212f.

[51] Ibid., p. 54.

[52] Ibid., pp. 211f.

In more technical Whiteheadian language, God is that characteristic of every actual entity whereby it is some sort of synthesis of feelings with an ideal aim in view. This is each occasions's creativity and the creativity of the universe. The sensitive feeling of feelings is less intense in some occasions than in others. But the fact that each occasion is sensitive at all is that ". . . which accounts for qualitative attainment in existence: the emergence of you and men, of creatures all about us, of the glories of earth and sea, the emergence of mind and spirit, of cultures in all their complexity, discipline, and form."[53] Being that which is productive of all that is worthwhile, this element of each actual occasion is that which men call God.[54]

God As Initial Aim -- There is a second fact of the nature of every actual entity which could conceivably be used in Whiteheadian theological construction. It is the initial aim. In effect, Whitehead's theory of the initial aim is that each occasion is presented with a complex possibility comprized by all of the possible modes of synthesis which it might become, in a graded order according to God's own preference.[55] God lures the occasion to actualize the most desirable systhesis. If this is eliminated by the concrescing occasion, then the next highest possibility lures it, etc., in descending order. Which specific possibility in the general scale of options the actual occasion finally becomes results from the occasion's own determination. Thus an occasion is free, but it is inescapably confronted by a vision of what it ought to be and it is gently urged toward the actualization of that vision.[56] Whitehead's theory of the initial aim is meant to explain our personal experience of the best alternative in any given situation which may be approximated to a greater or lesser degree. It is also intended to explain the impetus toward orderly repetition in the events of the natural world. Hence the initial aim is the basis of both moral and natural order. As such its claim to religious significance cannot be dismissed lightly.

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[53] Meland, "Interpreting the Christian Faith," p. 92.

[54] It cannot be denied that in some sense evil exists because of the synthesizing character of actual entities. That is, without creativity there would be no actual entity and hence no evil. But in the final analysis evil exists only because creativity is not fully effective. This insufficiency of sensitivity to actualize a perfect harmony of feeling is due to the synthesizing occasion's "decision" to actualize an ideal which is less than the fullest possible development for it (see above, pp. 59f.), and/or the limitations which the past places upon what the concrescing occasion might possibly become. In either case, evil is not the direct result of the synthesizing or creative character of actual entities.

The empirical Whiteheadian will not ask about the source of the initial aim. He is likely only to say that in fact there is a "best possible" for each human situation which we seem more or less clearly to intuit. He will also agree that the pervasiveness of order in the natural world suggests the efficacy of some sort of a final goal operative in each non-human occasion. His job as an empirical Whiteheadian theologian is not to seek the source of the initial aim in some transcendent actual entity or realm of possibility, but instead to point to the reality of the initial aim, to analyze its significance and to call men to seek its actualization. This, the "best possible," is that to which men ought to give themselves in wholehearted devotion. This is what operates as "God" in human experience.

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[55] See above, pp. 58f.

[56] An occasion prehends both the possibilities open to it, and God's preferential ordering of those possibilities. Because in Whitehead's system everything influences every future thing, Whitehead can claim that the very prehension of God's preference constitutes an influence, a lure, upon each occasion. Other feelings may intervene to make God's influence slight indeed, but it is never wholly absent.

God as an Aspect of Some Actual Entities

This position, option (e), is the view that some characteristic or element of only certain actual occasions is God. I will suggest two different ways in which this particular option in the empirical approach might be developed.

God as the Increase of Value -- There is one feature of Henry Nelson Wieman's theology which the theologians of creativity fail to transpose into Whiteheadian categories. Meland (and perhaps the others) finds creativity in every event. Wieman, however, finds only certain events to be creative. Actually, this difference stems more from a difference in their respective ontologies than from any disagreement as to what constitutes creativity. Meland and Wieman could both accept the statement that creativity is characteristic of any event in which value increases. From the atomism of the Whiteheadian view of actual entities, however, it follows that each new event, although heavily influenced by the past, is a wholly new creation. Since value is defined in terms of the harmony of feeling, and because to be an event at all requires that there be some synthesis of feeling, every actual entity is a creation of value. Thus every actual occasion constitutes an increase of value.

Wieman, without a strict atomism, is able to hold that values may endure through time in a way which the Whiteheadian does not.[57] Hence, for him, creativity is not simply the preservation of value, but more importantly an increase in the level of value already achieved.

Perhaps more similarity to this aspect of Wieman's understanding of creativity than Meland offers us might be obtained in viewing creativity as an improvement in the quality of harmonious feeling which an actual occasion achieves in comparison to its immediate predecessors. In such a view, for an occasion merely to repeat in a novel spatio-temporal region virtually the same synthesis of feeling reached in the satisfaction of an immediately past occasion would not constitute God. "God" would be used only to indicate that occurrence in which the level of qualitative synthesis is raised, in which an increase over the existing level of aesthetic harmony is gained.

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[57] Things do endure, in Whitehead's system, but they do so by the repeated exemplification of the same eternal object, not by the persistence of that which is the ultimate reality as is the case with Wieman's qualities. See above, pp. 43ff.

It should be admitted at once that an occasion of experience not characterized by an increase in value when compared to one occasion may be so characterized in relation to another predecessor. Moreover, whatever is achieved in any particular occasion may be quickly lost. There is no hope of the ultimate guaranteed preservation of new gains here as there is in Whitehead's doctrine of the consequent nature. But these points seem to me to be immaterial to the important intuition involved in the view under discussion. This is the judgment that, after all, what is of preeminent religious significance to man is the vision that some increase in value is always a possibility, however dim the possibility and temporary the increase.

While God can become a reality in each occasion only by the decision of that occasion, it is not correct to say that the occasion created God. The existence of a synthesis in which value increases, like the existence of any synthesis whatsoever, arises out of the complex interplay of many events at many levels so that God may properly be said to transcend in part the efforts of any one actual entity.

God as an Entertained Ideal -- In his Terry Lectures, John Dewey outlined a doctrine of God which, to my mind, can be expressed as one version of an empirical Whiteheadian theology.

Dewey's theology begins with the observation that the imagination takes a natural situation and idealizes it, arriving at what it deems a more perfect development of present conditions.[58] The result is a real possibility which is rooted in the present actual situation as an ideal for future actualization.[59]

All possibilities are imaginatively derived,[60] but among them, Dewey believes, are some unique in that their "authority over us is an undoubted fact."[61] These are the ideals such as justice, truth and love. The committment of the self to those ideals is what Dewey calls "faith."[62] The ideals as they are united with the actual through the human committment which they invoke, represent what Dewey calls "God." He writes: ". . . 'God' means the ideal ends that at a given time and place one acknowledges as having authority over his volition and emotion, the values to which one is supremely devoted, as far as these ends, through imagination, take on unity."[63]

God's unity is not the identity of the ideals which stir man's minds. These are many and varied. Rather the unity of God is singularity of the human response evoked by the variety of ideals.[64]

Dewey does not grudgingly admit the merely abstract character of the source of religious inspiration; he cherishes this characteristic of God as the means of removing much that is objectionable in religious belief.

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[58] John Dewey, A Common Faith (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934), p. 48; cf. pp. 33, 42, 43.

[59] Ibid., pp. 48, 50.

[60] Ibid., p. 43.

[61] Ibid., p. 44.

[62] Ibid., p. 33.

[63] Ibid., p. 42.

[64] Ibid., p. 43.

> It is admitted that the objects of religion are ideal in contrast with our present state. What would be lost if it were also admitted that they have authoritative claim upon conduct just because they are ideal? The assumption that these objects of religion exist already in some realm of Being seems to add nothing to their force, while it weakens their claim over us as ideals, in so far as it bases that claim upon matters that are intellectually dubious.[65]

Finally, Dewey argues that a God so conceived is sufficient to inspire religious committment, is urgently needed in an age so distraught, and is in fact that to which religious men have looked for ultimacy in all generations.[66]

From an empirical Whiteheadian point of view, Dewey's God could be described as certain possibilities consciously entertained with the subjective form of feeling known as "devotion." The fact that such prehensions must involve consciousness indicates that God will be a reality only for those occasions constituting the personally ordered society of the actual entities of a human mind. By "entertainment" is meant what Dewey calls the union of the ideal and the actual, for in Whitehead's system, ideals or real possibilities are ingredient in actuality only by being entertained or prehended by actual entities. Dewey says that God stands for that union of the ideal and the actual when it is accompanied by the religious attitude, i.e., loyalty, devotion, the desire to effect the actualization of the ideal, etc. Whitehead calls such attitudes, "subjective forms of feeling."

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[65] Ibid., p. 41.

[66] Ibid., pp. 51f.

The question of which ideals are those which, when entertained with devotion, are what is meant by God may be debated and decided variously. Dewey would suggest those ideals which if actualized would be instrumental to the enrichment of human life in each new situation. Any more precise specification will be discovered only by intelligent effort in each unique situation. The empirical Whiteheadian may attempt to be more explicit by providing a general theory of what it is which promotes life. But finally this difference is incidental to the general statement of a doctrine of the ontological status of God. On this issue both agree that the term "God" stands for certain possibilities entertained in moments of human life with an attitude of devotion. And they both agree that the customary ascription of divinity to a supreme being, the existence of which is at best dubious and more probably incredible, ought to be consciously and carefully redirected toward the ideals which in fact should guide the conduct of men and nations.

CHAPTER IX

LOGICAL POSSIBILITY AND EXISTENTIAL VALIDITY

In chapter one I attempted to clarify the relationship of philosophy to theological thinking. I argued there that some philosophical framework is unavoidably implied in every theological construction. While the inadequacy of a theology's philosophical presuppositions does not always condemn that theology to irrelevance, I believe a case could be made for the view that the force of any theology is eventually threatened by the incoherence or incredibility of its implied philosophical system. If this is so, the importance of an adequate philosophical vehicle for theological expression is clear. Any responsible thinker, then, who accepts this point of view will surely wish to ponder both the validity of a theology's philosophical framework, and the capacity of any philosophy to bear living theological options. Among other things, this dissertation, hopefully, has offered the reader an opportunity to make such an evaluation regarding Whitehead's philosophy and some of the theological options implicit within it.

Repeatedly it has been suggested in this study that the types of Whiteheadian theologies developed herein are, all of them, logically possible doctrines. Whatever their problems, in the main, I believe, they are neither unphilosophical (in the sense of being incapable of coherent and credible expression) no unscientific (in the sense of being contrary to the more generally accepted scientific interpretations of reality.) Nor are they repugnant to "common sense"--or great bodies of commonly shared visions of reality, anyway--at least after one accustoms himself to the novelty of Whitehead's thought-patterns and language. The Whiteheadian doctrine of God, as Whitehead and others have developed it, and the panentheistic, platonic and empirical modifications of Whitehead's theology, are careful developments of a coherent system of philosophy which are entirely credible so long as one accepts their basic presuppositions. At the least, I am saying, these views are systematically possible.

There will not, of course, be general agreement with this judgment. According to a concensus in philosophical circles today, such speculation, while perhaps internally consistent, contains one fatal flaw: it rests on premises that are for some reason inadequate. This criticism may be stated in different ways. Some of its expressions have been dealt with indirectly already. One is the view that the only useful type of philosophical endeavor is purely descriptive of experience. This position has been rejected by Whitehead, not because it is undesirable, but because it is impossible. Description without interpretation, Whitehead claims, is a dream never achieved.[1] If Whitehead is right, one's judgment concerning the nature of a chair, for example, will almost surely be less interpretive and more nearly descriptive than one's view (positive or negative) of the ultimate meaning of reality. But where one decides to draw the line between description (that is really in part interpretive) and interpretation (that is to some degree descriptive) is finally an arbitrary matter. Such a circumscription represents a personal point of view, not the boundary of logically possible schemes of thought.

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[1] See above, pp. 19f.

A variant of the positivist critique of speculative theology is that such talk is meaningless because it is unverifiable. That is, no empirical circumstancescould conceivably falsify its claims. Several answers have been offered ot this challenge. It has been said that the foundation of speculative theology is indeed unverifiable, but so are the basic assumptions of any system of thought however non-speculative it may appear to be.[2] A second and different answer is that while talk about God is in fact not verifiable, it does pertain to empirical facts which in principle could count for or against theological conclusions. Even though all of the necessary facts are not "in" at any given time, since theology is related to present facts it is presently meaningful.[3] A third reply to the positivist critique extends the second view to a new level. All of the facts necessary conclusively to verify or falsify theological assertions will be available eschatologically. Hence theological statements are eschatologically verifiable and consequently meet the criterion by which one judges statements to be meaningful.[4]

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[2] See R. M. Hare's discussion in Antony Flew and Alasdair MacIntyre, eds., New Essays in Philosophical Theology (London: SCM Press, 1961), pp. 99-103.

[3] See Basil Mitchell's discussion in Ibid., pp. 103-05.

Any of these approaches, if valid could be used to defend the speculative efforts of Whitehead or of anyone else against the charge of meaninglessness.

I am of the opinion, however, that Whitehead would be inclined to pursue another course of defense. His point of view is that metaphysical assertions are justified only in so far as they are useful in accounting for the broad range of human experience. Hence, Whitehead ought to argue, I believe, that his doctrine of God can be verified or falsified by the present or potential facts of experience. But the question arises, what precisely are the "facts of experience"? Which interpretation of the facts shall we accept as authoritative?

Whitehead cannot hope to demonstrate logically that all alternative interpretations of the "facts" are false. Given his view that there are no brute facts, that all perception involves interpretation, it seems reasonable that for Whitehead the final test of philosophical truth should be self-evidence. This of course, is the case.[5]

Hence he can only offer his interpretation of the immediate "facts" of experience upon which more speculative interpretation is based, and ask us to compare it with alternative interpretations, deciding for ourselves which seems more patently adequate.

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[4] See John Hick, Faith and Knowledge, chapter seven.

[5] See above, pp. 21f.

In short, to say that metaphysical schemes, in order to be meaningful, must be capable of verification by an appeal to experience really solves very little, if anything. For then one must verify or falsify competing views of the nature or facts of experience--and how is that to be done?

Asking what is the nature of experience brings to mind one final critique of the logical possibility of Whitehead's type of metaphysical argumentation. It is David Hume's view that reasoning about the nature of reality which depends upon the assumption of cause and effect relationships in the natural world rests upon an illusion. Hume's position, of course, is grounded in his epistemology and his epistemology arises out of his particular view of experience. A glance at one's experience, Hume argues, reveals that it consists only of impressions, ideas and their interconnections.[6] An impression is the awareness of a quality which "strikes upon the mind" with a considerable degree of "force and liveliness." An idea is a less forceful copy of an impression. The principles of the connection of ideas are resemblance, contiguity, and what is often taken to be the necessary relation of cause and effect.

It is the tremendously important notion of cause and effect which concerned Hume. What is the basis of the knowledge of this relationship? Is it apriori? Can the mind deduce a particular effect from what is taken to be its cause? Hume says no, for since the effect is totally different from the cause, we are completely unjustified in assuming that the former necessarily implies the latter. Prior to the experience itself, for example, a savage could hardly have reasoned that falling into a fire would be a rather unpleasant ordeal.

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[6] See David Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), Book I, Part III.

Then Hume asks whether our supposition of the causal relationship is based upon experience. We certainly do observe that certain impressions and their corresponding ideas follow other impressions and ideas quite regularly. We do, for example, notice that the idea of touching a very hot object is invariably followed by the idea of pain. We have impressions and corresponding ideas of "hot" and of "pain," but do we also have an impression of "cause."? Or, to take another example, in addition to two impressions, one of ball A rolling up to meet ball B, and the other of ball B immediately moving away from its resting place, do we also have a third impression that A caused B to move? Hume insists that we do not, and, given his view that reality consists of unrelated, atomic impressions and their derivative ideas, it is surely difficult to see how he could be wrong. Moreover, even if one did find a third impression, "cause," he would then need to look for two more impressions of "relatedness" to connect, first, "cause" to ball A, and, secondly, "cause" to ball B; and so on, ad infinitum. On Hume's assumptions, then, the idea of cause and effect seems without basis in our experience of the natural world. Moreover, even if we were simply to assume the reality of the causal relationship we would still have the problem of an infinite regress to solve. Therefore, Hume has seemed quite justified in concluding that the principle of causality is generated, not from prior impressions, but simply from the repetition of the identical conjunction of impressions which in some manner gives rise to our misguided beliefs in this regard.

What is significant about Hume's critique becomes apparent when we realize that the bulk of the arguments for God's existence are based upon the assumption that our idea of cause and effect represents what actually goes on in the natural world. For example, it is said that there is an order in natural events which surely must have some source; God, it is usually replied, is the cause of that order. Again, there exists a world of finite entities which, because they are finite, cannot explain their own existences; God is the necessary existent serving as the causal ground of finite things. Or, to use an example from Whitehead, there is an order in the ingression of eternal objects into actuality which requires explanation; God is the reason for that orderly concretion.

This type of argumentation can begin to make sense only if we have some other way of accounting for our views that effects need causes than Hume offered us. And without this alternative to Hume, all of this type of argumentation for the existence of God seems very futile indeed--including Whitehead's own version.[7]

Whitehead's primary purpose in considering Hume's position is not to make possible a rational basis for religious belief. It is more fully to enable a rational account of the total spectrum of human experience. Whitehead wants to provide a philosophical "context within which it is logically possible to acknowledge a fact of experience"--namely, causality.[8] But this can be accomplished, Whitehead believes, only by understanding perceptual experience in a manner different from Hume's. In Whitehead's opinion, when a becoming occasion seems to "view" its "contemporaries," it is instead projecting upon a space-time region an image derived from that occasion's feeling of its past.[9] Perception, then, involves two steps: first, the derivation of an image by an occasion's prehensions of its past, and secondly, that occasion's projection of its selective synthesis of these prehensions upon a contemporary space-time region.[10] Hume considered only the latter aspect of perceptual experience and noted correctly that it "does not disclose any causal influence."[11] This mode of perception, called "presentational immediacy," is but a patterned cluster of Humean qualities.

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[7] In a sense, Hume's own Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion is a discussion which he could have ignored. What he is attempting to do there, however, is to show that even if we assume causal relations in the natural world it is just as easy to argue for views of God and the world very much unlike those of traditional Christianity.

Whitehead avoids some of Hume's criticisms by making God a part of the natural world in a sense in which the God Hume is criticizing is not. This does not mean, to be sure, that if we assume causality, Whitehead's own idea of God necessarily follows. As this dissertation has attempted to show, this would not be the case even if one accepted Whitehead's particular doctrine of process.

[8] William Christian, p. 150. Cf. PR 252. For Professor Christian's discussion of the relation of Whitehead and Hume on this problem, see Christian, pp. 145-53. This discussion is a thoroughly competent representation of Whitehead's position, and it is one upon which the following material relies substantially.

[9] This position is required by Whitehead's view that there can be no relations between contemporaries. See above, p. 55.

If we wish to account for the sense of causality, Whitehead says, we must turn to perception in a second, more primitive mode, "causal efficacy." This is simply the present's prehension of its past: "A pure physical prehension is how an occasion in its immediacy of being absorbs another occasion which has passed into the objective immortality of its not-being. It is how the past lives in the present. It is causation."[12]

But where in causal efficacy is causality evident? The answer to this question is not that causality is one entity alongside others. In claiming that "a flash of light makes me blink," for instance, "makes" is not observed to be a third entity alongside of "flash" and "blink." In the experience itself, in distinction from reflection upon it, there is no separation of discrete entities. "Flash" and "blink" are experienced in a causal relationship: flash-as-causing-blink.[13]

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[10] See PR 472-90, and AI 236f. (186).

[11] PR 188.

[12] AI 305 (239).

[13] See PR 265; cf. Christian, pp. 148-50.

The peculiar character of perception in the mode of causal efficacy is to be admitted, for it is, as Whitehead says, "dogged with vagueness."[14]

> The former mode (causal efficacy) produces percepta which are vague, not to be controlled, heavy with emotion; it produces the sense of derivation from an immediate past, and of passage to an immediate future; a sense of emotional feeling, belonging to oneself in the past, passing into oneself in the present, and passing from oneself in the present towards oneself in the future; a sense of influx of influence from other vaguer presences in the past, localized and yet evading local definition, such influence modifying, enhancing, inhibiting, diverting, the stream of feeling which we are receiving, unifying, enjoying, and transmitting. This is our general sense of existence as one item among othere, in an efficacious actual world.[15]

Well, this is Whitehead's hypothetical explanation of the derivation of our sensitivity to cause and effect relationships in the natural world. Let me repeat that Whitehead has not intended to demonstrate the "necessary existence" of cause and effect. He only hopes to have shown that what seems to be an empirical fact can really be so interpreted in his system of thought, while in Hume's it cannot.

Now if one continues to hold to the discrete nature of objects of immediate experience, Whitehead's account will seem an utter absurdity. But if one takes the possibility of Whitehead's explanation seriously, the way is reopened for statements concerning the existence of God based upon the assumption of cause and effect. Whether one accepts all or a part of Whitehead's own reasoning along this line, discussed in chapters two through four, is another matter, as chapters seven and eight suggest. I do maintain, however, that, Hume to the contrary, the more speculative Whiteheadian theologies are also logical possibilities.

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[14] PR 268.

[15] PR 271.

The irony of our situation is that, even if correct, this conclusion settles little at all. It only points out that there are a number of logically possible positions of thought, some more speculative than others, within (and indeed without) the Whiteheadian circle of thought. The belief that this is the case explains the fact that our discussion of the alternatives in Whiteheadian theology has been a strangely superficial business. Instead of preferring a particular understanding of the nature of God and attempting to test the ability of Whitehead's philosophy to do it justice, our discussion has moved almost casually from theological position to position suggesting that in fact each of them is sensibly expressed in terms of Whitehead's philosophy and consistent with its own systematic presuppositions. The implication has been that if one cares to do so, he may adopt one point of view with as much systematic justification as another.

While the attempt to uncover the presuppositions of each theological use of Whitehead's philosophy has been careful and serious, no attempt has been made to judge their preferability. No debate has been conducted as to the superiority of one or another. This is because I believe that, in one very important sense, no such debate is possible. One can, of course, criticize the logical coherence of any point of view.

But I have suggested that most if not all of the views discussed herein are about equal in that regard. Given two or more equally valid systematic possibilities, the final determinant of what one deems "superior" is not rational argumentation at all. It is one's personal "vision of reality."

This position may be clarified by noting the distinction between "logical possibility" or "logical validity" on the one hand, and "existential possibility" or "existential validity" on the other. By this division I mean to suggest that a particular position may be logically consistent and hence theoretically conceivable, but remain quite impossible in its personal acceptability to a particular individual. That is, one may say of a philosophical position, "there is nothing self-evidently false about its premises or invalid about its arguments, but I simply cannot believe its conclusion to be an adequate representation of reality." In this case, the position would be deemed logically valid but not existentially or personally possible. Such might be the view of a realist toward idealism, an existentialist toward rationalism, a positivist toward platonism, a Protestant liberal toward fundamentalism, a Barthian toward 19th century German liberal theology, etc.

The rules for judging whether something is logically coherent or valid are fairly clear. But what is the criterion for personal meaningfulness or existential validity? My answer would be that to be possible existentially, the presuppositions of that view must conform to one's fundamental vision of reality.

Philosophical presuppositions, it seems to me, are expressions of one's vision of reality. A philosophical system is but the conceptual structure implied by a set of presuppositions. Hence one's philosophy is grounded in one's vision of reality.

By one's vision of reality I mean in part what R. G. Collingwood seems to have meant by "absolute presuppositions."[16] It is that body of "conceptual commitments (which) lie at the base of all systematic thinking in the sense that they furnish such thought with the basic concepts (categories) in terms of which its thinking, its questions and answers are expressed."[17] It is the sum total of those fundamental intuitions or faith-apprehensions forming the basis of one's interpretive judgments about reality.

It does not seem to me to follow from this that one's philosophical views are fixed, forever determined by his present view of reality. One's intuitive vision may change if its resultant philosophical presuppositions and consequent philosophical system gradually are shown to be less and less adequate to an effective understanding of experience. Now one of the ways such inadequacy is shown and change is effected, I suggest, is by debate at the level of theory. Therefore, there exists an interchange between one's vision of reality and one's philosophical theories. That is, one's basic intuitions not only influence but are also influenced by continuing experience, a part of which is the inspection of assumptions and the discussion of finished theories. This means that while what is logically possible depends largely upon what is existentially possible, what will be existentially possible for the future hinges in no small measure upon what is taken now to be logically possible.

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[16] See R. G. Collingwood, *An Essay on Metaphysics* (London: Oxford University Press, 1940) chapters four through seven.

[17] David Rynin, "Donagan on Collingwood," *The Review of Metaphysics* (December, 1964), p. 309. This article is a careful defense of much of Collingwood's view of metaphysics, written by a logical positivist.

In so far as judging the truth of visions of reality and their derivative schemes of thought presupposes the transcendence of all relative visions and the achievement of some absolute stance, no such judgment is possible. What one does judge, therefore, is the existential validity of various logically possible positions in terms of one's own vision of reality.

The philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead, therefore, will not have the significance of proving itself and its implicit theology right, and the possible modifications of Whitehead's theological viewpoint wrong. Nor will the range of positions, which I have called alternatives in Whiteheadian theology, be proved superior to non-Whiteheadian visions of God. The _immediate_ value of Whitehead's philosophical thought will be discovered only by those who do or eventually shall find in his general interpretation of reality a competent and meaningful tool for analyzing their own experiences of the world. To them it will provide a versatile vehicle for the expression of their presuppositions. Moreover, Whitehead's philosophy will provide a common linguistic context of admirable precision in which varying theological perspectives within the Whiteheadian framework may more clearly understand each other. In a day when the goal of philosophical thinking is more commonly clarity than certainty, this is perhaps enough to offer.

There is however, a further potential value in Whitehead's endeavor. The dominant vision of reality in most reflective circles today excludes much if not all that is speculative in philosophy and theological thought. Now I have argued that the relationship between what is considered existentially possible and logically possible is a dual one, each influencing the other. If this is true, it means that the positivist vision of reality may have arisen in part because for so long it has seemed that metaphysical speculation in one way or another requires false assumptions and hence is logically impossible. The significance of Whitehead's achievement in this situation is clear. It may make speculative theology (and philosophy) worth one's attention.

I am not arguing the "truth" of any Whiteheadian conclusions, at this point, but only the importance of his method. It can be assumed, to be sure, that I personally find Whitehead's general interpretation of reality to be in most respects a very compelling one. And it seems to me, furthermore, that the Whiteheadian expression of theological options is virtually exhaustive and that it sets out the crucial issues clearly and concisely. This alone is sufficient to commend Whitehead to my own consideration. But the most significant thing about Whitehead's work, in my judgment, is the fact that it has loosed the more speculative answers to man's ultimate questions from the bonds of embarrassment. For if metaphysics as a hypothetical generalization from a finite apprehension of reality, for the purpose of expressing one's interpretation of the world--if this speculative undertaking has been re-established by Whitehead (and others) as a systematic possibility for the modern mind, then perhaps it can also re-establish this way of viewing the world as an existential possibility for the modern soul.

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